



Henry Morford

RHYMES

OF

Twenty Years.

BY HENRY MORFORD.

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TO
THAT PORTION OF HUMANITY
WHICH RECOGNIZES
POETRY IN THE HOME AFFECTIONS,
AND
ROMANCE IN THE EXPERIENCES OF EVERY-DAY LIFE—
THIS VOLUME OF
R H Y M E S,
STRUNG BY THE WAYSIDE OF LABOR,
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

THE scope of this volume is very fairly indicated by the title-page, and only a very brief prefatory word is needed, if any. The collection is really what it purports to be:—the “Rhymes of Twenty Years”—or at least a portion of them,—the date of composition extending over that period. Just twenty years have elapsed since the publication, by the writer, of his first poems, in the *New Yorker*, Philadelphia *Saturday Evening Post*, and other newspapers of that day. Most of those included in the collection have had a fleeting existence, first or last, in different newspapers, magazines and annuals published during that interval, and a considerable number have long since lost any remembrance of their origin. A few have never before been published—having been written or reserved for first appearance in this collection. The limited space at command, and the necessity of rigid judgment, have caused the omission of many poems which the writer would otherwise gladly have preserved. Some of greater length, which a few partial friends may remember, have been omitted, with a view to possible future publication in a separate volume.

NEW YORK CITY, 15th August, 1859.

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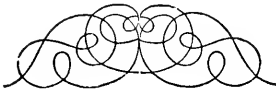
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RHYMES.

TAKING DOWN THE BRICK-CHURCH BELL.

THROUGH the old Brick-Church's steeple, through the
timbers rudely bared
By the hands of stalwart workmen—once so proudly
heavenward reared—
Saw I in the morning sunlight glimpses of the dark
blue sky,
And I knew our faith's old temple could no longer
tower on high.

Mammon claimed another trophy, from the old and
sacred won ;
Trade must have its place of comfort, though the
whole world be undone :
And the graves where slept our fathers, long before to
pick and spade
All their old and sacred relics had uncovered and
betrayed.

Now had fallen roof and cornice, and like ribs of
 stranded ships
Peered the bare and blackened rafters, with their laths
 in broken strips ;
And, the ruthless work completing, o'er them crawled
 the forms of men—
Like so many greedy earthworms turning man to dust
 again.

I had seen the rude pine coffins, handled with irreve-
 rent haste,
Borne away in jolting wagons, and in far-off grave-
 yards placed ;
Not a mourner left to follow, of the crowd who long
 ago
To their grieved and honored burials paced with foot-
 steps sad and slow.

Upward to the swift destruction sadly looked the pass-
 ing crowd,
Sadly downward from the heavens reverent eyes saw
 faces bowed ;
And the hearts that time and sorrow had not rendered
 stern and cold
Grieved that in the New's young footsteps perished
 all that decked the Old.

Then at noon, when in the bustle of the hurried,
crowded day

All the softer thoughts of morning with its mists had
rolled away—

From the wrecked and mangled steeple came a faint
and broken toll,

Such as sorrow's trembling fingers might have rung
when passed a soul.

From its fastenings in the tower, where proud hands
its weight had hung

In the days when England ruled us—when King
George the Third was young—

As if well those men remembered how the dying
claimed a knell,

They were striking as they lowered—taking down the
Brick-Church bell.

Then I thought how o'er the city—through the night
and through the day—

Tolling out for joy or sorrow—those old chimes had
rung away ;

When our land a struggling infant seemed 'neath
tyrant feet to lie,—

When dispirited and beaten they had fled as tyrants
fly ;—

When in after years the nations saw our light across
the sea,
And here flocked the trampled millions who had spirit
to be free :
When in one the nations blending saw the eagle's wing
unfurled,
And we grew to be a power and a wonder in the
world.

Those old chimes had rung at noontide, when the
hearts of men beat high ;
Those old chimes had rung at midnight, when the red
flames flushed the sky ;—
Pealing for a nation's birth-day, tolling for a great
man's doom,
Ringling out the same low music for the triumph or
the tomb.

Up the street where vice was flashing on its wild and
reckless course—
Down the street where heartless traffic swept with all
its giant force—
Telling to the generations sleeping now beneath the
sod,
There was yet a pause in Nature—there was yet in
Heaven a God.

Now 'twas ended :—church and steeple—bell whose
tongue such memories told—
Passing as all things are passing that are reverend,
gray and old.
In the city's crowd still hear I, as an undertone, that
knell—
As it rung when men were busy, taking down the
Brick-Church bell !



SADNESS OF THE EVENING RAIN.

ALL day long against the casement
Has the heavy south rain beat ;
All day long the pools have widened
In the wet and dreary street ;
But the night has thickened o'er us,
And I listen to its sound,
As if something, long departed,
With the night was gathering round.

Sadness stealeth o'er my spirit,
Silent sadness, not of pain,
Such as ocean's murmur bringeth—
Coming with the evening rain.
I am lonely, very lonely,
Yet I would be so an hour,
And let by-gone thoughts and feelings
Bring their saddening, soothing power.

I will stand amid the rain-drops,
With the night-wind round my head,
And call up departed faces
Of the absent and the dead.
I will shut my eyes and see them
As they looked so long ago,
I shall hear their pleasant voices
In the rain-drops murmuring low

I will think of thee, my mother,
In thy grave of many years ;
I will think of thee, but never
With the grief that bringeth tears ;
For thou hast not lived to sorrow
O'er my ways, so weak and wild ;
Thou hast never known the footsteps
Of thy poor and wayward child.

Close beside thee in the church-yard
Sleeps the fairest of our line ;—
Loved and lost, my dove-eyed sister,
Half of earth and half divine.
But two years our darling lingered,
When the mother's voice had died,
And she passed away in autumn,
And we laid her by thy side.

O'er your heads the rain is falling,
O'er your graves the wind is chill ;
But your memory has not left us,
And your presence lingers still :
And we think of you when evening
Has its robe of darkness on,
When the rain is in the heavens,
And the happy stars are gone.

I will think of pleasant faces
That have shone across my way,
That have faded in the spring-time
And gone back again to clay ;
Old time friends, and loved companions,
Buried in their early prime,—
All, whose death has cast a shadow
O'er my spirit's morning time.

They are here, as I once knew them ;
I will shut my eyes and dream
That the touch of time and sorrow
Has not made us what we seem.
They are gone, and I am lonely,
Musing in the evening rain,
Of all by-gone times and seasons
That will never come again.

UNDER THE WILLOWS.

Under the willows downward sweeping
Over the bridge of mossy stone,
And the sluggish stream that is seaward creeping—
Under the willows I stand alone.

Years have gone since I saw the shadows
Gather at evening o'er this stream—
Saw these orchards and these meadows
Fade in the twilight into a dream.

Years—and the cheek that was brown and ruddy
Tells that the world has crime and care ;
Years—and the spoiler, stern and steady,
Has been weaving his silver in my hair.

Yet I can bear in my recollection
Pleasant things that once have been ;—
The burial places of lost affection
Are Sepulchres yet the heart must win.

Maud was here, with her merry laughter—

Maud, with her cheek of richest bloom—
A smile and a warm tear following after—
Type of the world and her early doom.

Over this rail we leaned together—

Maud and I, in the evening gray ;
The willows swaying hither and thither,
And the sluggish river creeping away.

She was mine—how well I remember—

Mine still nearer she was to be
When the chilly blasts of the next November
Should shake the leaves from our trysting-tree.

When the world grew bleak and cheerless,

And the wintry winds were making moan—
Our lives should burst into spring-time peerless,
Such as Eden had never known.

Hand in hand, as the eve was falling,

Maud and I in the twilight stood,
In the waterfall's rush heard our young loves calling,
And saw them mingling down the flood.

Was it her fate that, louder even

Than the voice of the waterfall was heard,
Calling away from earth to heaven
The snowy wings of my sinless bird ?

Maud sprang from my side—stood the parapet over—
Her light foot pressed on the crumbling stone ;—
Reached for a branch that swayed above her—
It yielded beneath her—she was gone !

“ Harry ! ”—I heard her dear voice ringing,
As I saw her white dress fluttering down !
Had I known the call was the Lurline singing,
I would have plunged with her to drown.

Down where under the crumbling arches
Swept the dark and sluggish tide—
In the thickest gloom of the willows and larches,
Sought I under the water my bride.

Gone ! No white dress floated toward me,
No voice called “ Harry ” through the gloom !
God, how I shrieked ! but no more she heard me,
And I knew the arches spanned her tomb !

No ! there was hope ! a white gleam fluttered
Far below, and a moment more—
As one prayer of thanks my set lips uttered—
I had borne my darling to the shore.

“ Maud ? ” Oh no, I had seized the casket
From which my broken jewel had fled !
Love’s dear skill—it were vain to task it ;
Maud was senseless—Maud was dead !

Dead ! my bride ! As if but a feather
I clasped her to my bosom warm ;
Smote my knees, in their fear, together,
But I sped away with her drooping form.

Up the bank my wild steps hastened—
Senseless still was the weight I bore—
Dashed open a door that stood unfastened,
And laid my lost one on the floor.

Moaning and sobbing they gathered round her ;
Skill and prayer were little avail ;
Death had woven the spell that bound her,
Death was stamped on her forehead pale.

Under the edge of her golden tresses
Deep in her temple had crashed the stone !
She woke no more to our caresses ;
I was left in the world alone !

Many a year the sweet wild roses
Over her grave have bloomed and died ;
Slowly this sad existence closes—
I am going to meet my bride.

Under the willows downward sweeping—
Here by the stone-bridge old and gray—
Maud comes back to still my weeping ;—
Comes, and beckons me away.

THIRTY-FIVE.

HALT on the road a little space !

Pull up your team, old charioteer !

You're hurrying on at a slapping pace ;

Suppose we stop and consider, here !

If our lives are three score and ten—

If my count is all to be told—

The half-way-house we are passing, then,

Thirty-five long winters old !

How has the ride been, charioteer ?

Plenty of dust and a little of mire ?

Cold north winds on the hills severe,

And the air of the valleys thick with fire ?

Horses balking, then running away—

Lynch-pin lost and an axle down ?—

Creeping, crippled, at close of day,

To a night of rest at tavern or town ?

More than this, oh charioteer !

We have rounded the hills in the flush of morn—
Heard the sunrise bird sing loud and clear,

And snuffed the breeze on the blue waves born.

We have caught such glimpses of Eden vales,

Heard such sounds by wood and stream—

Drank such breath on the summer gales—

As made all life an Elysian dream !

Rough and loud have voices been—

Pelting and bitter missile and storm ;

But ever at last have we hurried in

And found some shelter snug and warm.

Kind, sometimes, have been word and fare ;

Strong and steady the helping hand ;

And erring roads had many a prayer

Breathed o'er them from the better land !

How much further, charioteer ?

To the end ? and he shakes his head.

No, to the eyes of an olden seer

Peril is looming near and dread !

Tell me not, oh charioteer !

Bold and blind let me meet my fate !

Only thus our journey steer—

So that we wreck at the Beautiful Gate !

Onward, now, but tighten rein !

Downward, now, our journey lies !

Weakened soon will grow hand and brain,

And the mist comes over failing eyes !

God be with us, charioteer !

Keep us with heart and hope alive !

Sad and short is our stoppage here—

At the half-way house of thirty-five !



THE COMING OF THE BAGPIPES TO
LUCKNOW.

THRILLED ye ever with the story,
How on stricken fields of glory
Men have stood beneath the murderous iron hail !—
Closing up, with words unspoken,
Where their ranks were rent and broken,
Meeting death with set teeth and forehead pale ?
Has your blood run cold and colder,
As they shoulder stood to shoulder,
Waiting long for the coming of their aid ?
Forgetting creeds and races
Have the tears run down your faces,
When the banner of their succor was displayed ?

Have ye seen the gaze so eager—
In some long and deadly leaguer—
Cast abroad for the coming of relief ;—
When the walls in heaps were lying,
And the starving men were dying,
And the women drooped in horror and in grief ?

Have your hearts their march been drumming,
When the joyful cry "they're coming!"
Lighted up every grimed and pallid brow?
Then, oh then your eyes have glistened,
And your hearts leaped as you listened
To the Coming of the Bagpipes to Lucknow!

For the walls in heaps were crumbled,
And the cannon roared and rumbled—
That were eating them with iron teeth away;
Hunger's gnawing pang grew stronger,
Human strength could stand no longer;
Clutched the butcher already for his prey!
Twenty times by foes outnumbered,
With their helpless sick encumbered,
Leagues away were our heroes struggling on;
They would come, and wreak above us
Vengeance due from those who love us—
They would come—but Lucknow would be gone!

Still, while life and reason lasted—
Though all broken, sick and wasted—
Stood our soldiers unshrinking at their posts;
Still like clouds of black disaster—
Swarming closer, coming faster—
Pressed onward to our doom the rebel hosts.

Oh, could we so be given,
While there dwelt one bolt in heaven,
To the red feast of rapine and of blood ?
Was a story thus appalling—
All with perished Lucknow fallen !—
To be told to our friends beyond the flood ?

Moaning that my lot was woman—
Shrinking from the fiends inhuman
Who ere long should make ribald jests of me—
In the sultry noontide sinking,
Coolness from the bare earth drinking—
My poor Jessie lay dreaming at my knee.
Thick her brain with burning fever
That I knew should never leave her
Till the death-shade should thicken o'er her eyes—
I heard her murmuring lowly
Of the old home lost and holy,
Bonnie Scotland, her mountains and her skies.

She heard the sweet burn singing,
She saw the blue-bell springing,
She was tripping by the brig and by the bield ;
And she told me, in her slumber,
She had something to remember
When her father came from plowing in the field !

Hark ! a wild cry—was she dying ?

From her place beside me flying—

It must be her death struggle, and she raved !

“ Hark ! the bagpipes ! how they’re humming !

 Dinna ye hear the Campbells coming !

’Tis the slogan of the Highlands ! We are saved !”

No ! oh no ! the cannons’ thunder,

And the sappers mining under—

Nothing more, my poor Jessie, in the air !

And the heart, one moment lightened,

Back again fell strained and frightened,

Back again in its terrible despair.

And again beside me kneeling—

Losing strength, and life, and feeling—

Poor Jessie for a moment sank to die !

But a moment, and upspringing,

From her lips the words came ringing—

Louder yet, and the soldiers caught the cry :

“ Am I dreamin’ ? Na ! nae dreamin’ !

’Tis the Scottish eagle screamin’ !

’Tis the slogan o’ Macgregor, shrill and clear !

Cheer ye, soldiers ! loud, and louder,

Let them know ye yet have powder !

We are saved ! The Highlanders are here !”

And we heard, indeed, the humming,
 Over all the cannon booming,
 And it widened and it deepened in its peal,
 Till we stopped no more to listen,
 As we caught the joyful glisten
 Of the sun on the lines of British steel !

Oh, the shout that then was given !
 But the sounds that rose to heaven
 Were not all for our rescue or our right !
 She was there whose ear unaltered—
 When all others failed and faltered—
 Heard the slogan of the Scot o'er the fight !
 Many a year shall dull and darken,
 Eyes that smile and ears that hearken,
 The sod will be cold on many a brow—
 Ere the world shall lose the story
 Of that gleam of Britain's glory—
 The Coming of the Bagpipes to Lucknow !

AN HOUR AT THE OLD PLAY-GROUND.

I SAT an hour to-day, John,
Beside the old brook stream,
Where we were school-boys in old time,
When manhood was a dream ;
The brook is choked with fallen leaves,
The pond is dried away—
I scarce believe that you would know
The dear old place to-day.

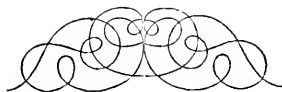
The school-house is no more, John,
Beneath our locust trees ;
The wild rose by the window side,
No more waves in the breeze ;
The scattered stones look desolate,
The sod they rested on
Has been plowed up by stranger hands
Since you and I were gone.

The chestnut tree is dead, John,
And what is sadder now—
The broken grape vine of our swing
Hangs on the withered bough ;
I read our names upon the bark,
And found the pebbles rare
Laid up beneath the hollow side,
As we had piled them there.

Beneath the grass-grown bank, John,
I looked for our old spring,
That bubbled down the alder path,
Three paces from the swing.
The rushes grow upon the brink,
The pool is black and bare,
And not a foot this many a day
It seems, has trodden there.

I took the old blind road, John,
That wandered up the hill ;
'Tis darker than it used to be
And seems so lone and still !
The birds sing yet among the boughs,
Where once the sweet grapes hung ;
But not a voice of human kind,
Where all our voices rung.

I sat me on the fence, John,
That lies as in old time,
The same half panel in the path,
We used so oft to climb—
And thought how o'er the bars of life
Our play-mates had passed on,
And left me counting on this spot
The faces that are gone.



THE PENSIONERS.*

THEY come but twice a year,
When the pension-day rolls round,—
Old men with hoary hair,
And their faces to the ground.
One leans upon his crutch,
And one is upright still,
As if he bore Time's clutch
With an iron nerve and will.

And feeble are the steps
That so patiently they feel,
And they kiss, with trembling lips,
The old Bible and the seal :
And they lay with care away,
In wallets old and worn,
The scant and tardy pay
Of a life of toil and scorn.

* The Pensioners of the War of the Revolution, as they appeared, in official intercourse with them, twenty or twenty-five years ago.

They love a cheerful pipe,
And a warm place in the sun,
From an age so old and ripe
To call memories one by one ;—
To tell of Arnold's crime,
And of Washington's proud form,
That beamed, in battle time,
A light above the storm.—

To tell of Yorktown's day,
When the closing fight was gained,
When Cornwallis went away,
And the eagle was unchained :
To show us, o'er and o'er,
The seamed and withered scars
That many a hero bore,
As his passport, from the wars.

'Tis pride, with these old men,
To tell what they have seen,
Of battle-fields, again
With the harvests bright and green:
'Twill be pride, when we are old,
To say that in our youth
We heard the tales they told,
And looked on them in their truth.

I love them, as I love
The spot where I was born,
And the star that shone above
On my very natal morn.
I love them, as I love
A temple built of old,
Round whose base whole nations move,
And whose history ne'er is cold.

They are the last sad link
Of a race of men with ours,
Who stood on ruin's brink,
And built up a nation's towers.
They are passing, as the foam
From the ocean wave departs ;—
But finding yet a home
In heaven, and in our hearts.

And when the last is gone,
If heaven spare us, we will build
A pyramid of stone,
Whose top the sun shall gild—
When the name of England's weal,
Her power, and her wrong,
Shall be told but in a tale,
And known but in a song !

THE BLOSSOMS OF MY YOUTH.

THE blossoms of my youth are blowing,
Blowing ere their time :
The summer sun on spring is glowing,
And at twenty cometh prime.
Oh froward heart ! how soon together
Summer and autumn fall !
How soon the leaves by the woodside wither,
And dust is over all !

The blossoms of my youth are fading,
Fading ere their time ;
And o'er my heart a wing is shading,
Like the thought of heavy crime.
Oh darkened heart ! there is a canker
At the core of thy bridal rose :
Yet Hope, sweet Hope ! on thy mighty anchor
Rest till the drama close !

The blossoms of my youth are falling,
Falling ere their time ;
I hear the birds from a far land calling,
Singing a sunnier clime.
Oh weary heart ! o'er hopes departed
Muse in thy tears awhile,
But think of the land of the faithful-hearted,
And turn to the world and smile.



SANTA CLAUS, FRIEND OF THE CHILDREN.

GRAY-HEADED friend of the children—
God of the frosty beard—
Whose temples the hearts of millions
A thousand years have reared !
Coming as comes the frost-work
Thick on the midnight pane—
Again we have all become children ;
Thou art with us again.

Fires blaze bright in the chimney—
Such as the old men love
In the far-off back-woods country
When the winter sky is above.
Household circles are gathered,
Hearty and jolly and hale,
Drinking the golden cider,
Or quaffing the nut-brown ale.

Under the Christmas holly
With its berries of glistening red,
By lips that long have been silent
The words of love are said ;
And over the grand-dame's knitting,
And over the grand-sire's pipe
Are old affections gathered,
Nearly a century ripe.

Brightly the young eyes sparkle,
As they range upon line and nail
The stockings to meet thy bounty,
That never was known to fail :—
Sally's, so near to a woman's,
Bob's, a great sack of wool,
And Susan, the wee bit fairy's,
Scarce holding a thimble-full !

Ever, oh friend of the children,
Thou camest to teach us well
How the great old law of kindness
In human hearts should swell.
We heard no step in the parlor,
No rattle upon the roof,
But thy gifts were there in the morning,
And we needed no better proof.

We are older, many years older—
Sally, and Susan, and I,
While Bob in a far-off country
Has laid him down to die ;
And the knitting-pins are relics
Of the loving toil they bore,
And the holly branch is missing—
The old days come no more !

But thou, oh friend of the children,
We bless thy hoary hair,
And we see the days departed
In thy bald front, stern and bare.
Thou art the old and the kindly,
The good in thought and deed ;
And, older and sadder children,
We look for the gifts we need.

Give us, oh friend of the children—
We all are children poor—
Give us the strength to suffer,
To battle and endure !
Give us those hearts of blessing
That spring from a happy land !
Give us those bowels of kindness
That guide the liberal hand !

Give us calm resignation
To the will that smites us low !
Give us a pleasant memory
Of the buried long ago !
Give us those lives of goodness
That, when our brows are bare,
May gem them with well-won honor,
Or ray our silvered hair !

Gray-headed friend of the children,
Oh, leave us not alone,
But come—as thou can'st to our parents—
When our children are dead and gone !
And totter the fabric of nations,
The gray world crumble and fall,
Ere the stockings of needy children
Cease to hang by the wall !

NUN URSULA.

LISTEN to me, nun Ursula,

Before you leave the world behind you !

I must speak, and speak to-day,

To-morrow the convent walls will bind you.

Where are you going, and what would you do ?

Cheat the world of the duty you owe it ?

That is no deed for a woman true !

Hush your heart, and you still must know it.

You are very fair, nun Ursula !

Very fair, with your golden tresses,—

With your cheek that might be a rose in May,

And your lip where hover a thousand blisses ;—

With your arm and your bust of Juno mould,

Such as of old had the Grecian mothers :

Not all our race at *your* birth was told—

Something, I think, you owe to others.

You are very pure, nun Ursula !

Very pure, in your maiden feeling,
With the beads you tell ten times a day,
And your earnest eyes to heaven appealing.
The pure are few enough, I trow ;
In the daughters of Eve her fault has risen :
When one pure heart is found below,
Why should you shut it away in a prison ?

You are very sweet, nun Ursula !

You dwell in our hearts with the birds and the roses :
What right have you to take away
One budding charm that the earth discloses ?
We are better when you tarry here,
We are worse when you leave us sad and lonely :
Here's a field of Christian labor, dear,
And you have a call to fill it, only !

You are seeking heaven, nun Ursula,

A heaven of peace, and may you win it !
But you're driving a hundred hearts away,
By taking, too soon, your station in it !
The convent walls are dark and deep,
And the rose on your cheek will fade and wither !
Pause, Ursula, before you weep !
Love *me*—we will look for heaven together.

ELLENORE IS DYING.

THE organ under the window plays ;
Spring from that hand so squalid—
Snatches of long-forgotten lays,
Opera and ballad,
What in the busy street is he
To the dense crowd onward flying ?
Nothing !—but he is much to me—
Ellenore is dying !

Low I hear the wail arise—
Plaintive wail of The Sleeper ;
It may bring a drop to other eyes—
But mine have a fountain deeper
Years ago she sung it to me—
A bird its last song trying :
Her next song in Heaven will be—
Ellenore that is dying.

Glowing and soft on the quiet earth,
Lay the sad September,
When that plaintive tale had birth
That so well I remember.
She was sitting with drooping head,
I at her feet was lying,
When those gentle words were said
That told of her early dying.

Sad was her story of shame and wrong,
Wasted life and honor,—
Sore temptation, battled long
Ere the tempter won her ;—
A broken heart from its fetter and chain
Ever Heavenward flying—
Pleading for love, but pleading in vain—
Beaten back, and dying.

Sad was the tale to her I told,
In words that were best unspoken—
Of a life in early youth grown old,
Of high hopes crushed and broken ;
And the tears flowed freely, each for each,
Sad heart to heart replying,
As we spoke of the graves we soon should reach,
And the peace that would come with dying.

Then, poured like oil upon the sea
Of our lacerated feeling,
From a fortress band the melody
Of Sonnambula came stealing.
And those pale, sad lips took up the strain
And sang it amid their sighing,
Leaving its memory in my brain
Till the very day of my dying

Years have passed—we are far apart ;
We never shall be nearer,
Unless in the heaven of the faithful heart
We see with a vision clearer.
Ellenore on her bed of death
Her wing for the skies is trying,
With the looks of grief and the bated breath
That surround the couch of the dying.

Under my window every day
Sonnambula is ringing,
I cannot drive the thought away—
To me it is Ellenore singing ;
But it smites me with a sound of pain,
Like a child in the dark woods crying :—
For I shall never see her again—
Ellenore is dying !

ELLENORE IS DEAD.

I HEAR a church bell tolling low ;
I see a sad train moving slow :
I know some blinding tears are shed—
They have cause, for Ellenore is dead.

Her heart of bounding love is cold ;
There is ravage on her beauty's mould :
The damp is on her sunny head—
Death's damp—for Ellenore is dead.

We cannot think her wealth of grace
Could crowd within a coffin's space :
We loathe the bridegroom she has wed—
Dark bridegroom—Ellenore is dead.

Oh, sadly, in her lonely rest,
Will miss her those who loved her best ;
And her worst foes some tears may shed,
When whispering—"Ellenore is dead !"

She walks with erring feet no more !
The path is straight on the other shore !
What will they do for one instead
To blame—now Ellenore is dead ?

They made her wear the sackcloth gray
Along her sad life's thorny way.
The bridal white and the bridal bed
Were not for Ellenore—Ellenore dead.

Now, white her robe as the angels wear ;
Her spirit robes may be as fair :
Where they neither woo, nor win, nor wed,
There may be peace for Ellenore dead.

Some kindly eyes and loving hearts
May miss her gentle, winning arts ;
And when the feast of soul is spread
We will think, sometimes, of Ellenore dead.

But then will cease our sudden pain,
When we think how falls the summer rain
Alike on the just and the unjust head :—
'Tis well that Ellenore is dead.

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN THE SEA.*

SHIVERED and shaken from her deck to keel,
Her rent seams to the waters opening wide—
Down in the surges, with a drunken reel
Plunged the stout ship that once had been our pride.

Down ! down !—There were no curses on the air,
No agonizing prayer burst aloud ;
But each stood frozen to a calm despair,
Waiting the closing of his great sea-shroud.

Down with the vessel in her eddying swirl—
A hundred fathoms in the angry main—
The thick waves closing with their dash and curl—
Engulfing all—oh, who should rise again ?

Yet from that fearful burial some arose
Blinded with brine and choking for their breath ;
Beating the surges with enfeebled blows,
Winning, it might be, but one gasp from death.

* "Mr. ——— states that late in the night he distinctly heard the Lord's Prayer repeated by some one near him, who without doubt thought himself alone."—*Account of the Central America Disaster.*

Clinging with weakened hands to broken spars,
Grasping each other as if arms could save—
Night closed, and through the rent clouds looked the
stars,
A dismal, ghastly light upon the wave.

Awhile we kept together ; then, apart
We dashed and floated onward ; more and more,
While yet we saw them, losing strength and heart,
And sinking in that sea without a shore.

And then I was alone—alone with night,
And wind and sea, and the dim stars that shed
Upon my upturned face their feeble light,
But long ere morn should look upon me dead !

My cold lips tried to syllable a prayer ;
Alas ! they could not ! All my wasted years
Came ghastly from their grave and mocked me there,
And I could only swell the sea with tears—

Tears blent for love, and pain, and crime, and hate,
Still blinding more my dim eyes as they burst ;—
Regrets for all of wrong—regrets too late ;
Sobs for my lost ones—lost myself the worst !

Was it the storm-wind singing in my ears ?

Was it my senses growing weak and dim ?
Or did I hear through the long perished years
The chanting of an old cathedral hymn ?

Hark ! lulled a moment was the sad wind's wail ;
I heard a voice—I was not all alone !
Oh, God ! when human strength and spirit fail,
What is it worth to hear one human tone !

Still calmer slept the wind. I heard the word
That from my fellow struggler in the sea—
When only Heaven, he deemed, the suppliance heard—
Went up, Eternal Father, unto thee !

“ Our Father ! ” how my heart leapt struggling forth !
“ Who art in Heaven ! hallowed be thy name !
“ Thy kingdom come, and over all the earth
“ Even as in Heaven, thy will be done the same !

“ Give us this day our daily bread !—forgive
“ As we forgive, the trespasses we feel !
“ And lead us not in evil ways to live,
“ But shield us from all wrong, and bless and heal !

“ For thine is all the glory, power and might

“ Forever and evermore ! Amen ! ”

The last word died upon the air of night,

The blast uprose—I was alone again !

Alone ? no, not alone ! He came to me

Who breathed “ Our Father ! ” once, with lips unstained—

Who uttered, “ Peace ! be still ! ” on Galilee,

And night, and darkness and the storm were chained.

Upon that prayer my heart had risen anew,

With it my soul had linked itself to God !

I felt the Arm of Might as strong and true

As when in human flesh He walked abroad.

He guided me among the drifting spars,

He gave the strength that still my form upbore ;

His eye looked kindly on me from the stars ;

No more I murmured, and despaired no more !

Slow wore the night, and when the morning broke

Dawned hope and rescue with its earliest light :

I know not who that prayer at midnight spoke—

Living or dead his is the Arm of Might !

“NOTHING TO ME.”

“I’m nothing to you !” said my brown-eyed beauty,
As up I lifted her baby sister—
Filling a parent’s pleasantest duty—
Parted her golden ringlets, and kissed her :
“*I’m* nothing to you !” and the red lips pouted,
And the eyes were brimming with troubled waters :
Heaven ! what a pain that my love was doubted—
The love so wed to my baby daughters !

“Nothing to me ?” Could the little treasure
Have known how deeply my heart was throbbing
With a love that was nearer a pain than a pleasure,
I never had heard that tender sobbing.
I drew her home to my yearning bosom,
I kissed her lips, and her cheeks, and her tresses :
I think she learned—my little blossom—
She was “something to me” ere I ceased my caresses.

“Nothing to me !” Oh days of anguish,
That we bear when our darlings’ faces are clouded—
Oh hopes and fears when the weak heads languish—
Oh sobs when one for the grave is shrouded—
Oh sleepless nights, when the brain is carving
Some plan the paths of their feet to brighten—
Oh sharpest pang of the poor and the starving
When love in death makes the heart-strings tighten !

Bear witness, all, that howe’er we have broken
Bonds that were sacred, in shame and folly—
We have held one promise, dear but unspoken ;—
We have kept the love of our children holy !
They are part of us ! nor time, nor distance
Can memory cheat of their moans or their laughter—
Not even when closes the day of existence
In the Night or the Morn of the long Hereafter !

THE CRIPPLE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

It was bright in the merry Christmas time,
Bright in the cheerful air,—
When the bells rung out with a pleasant chime,
And the old men gathered to prayer ;—
When the heart beat quick as it lived again,
The Christmas times gone by,
And a warm kind wish was breathed amain
For all beneath the sky.
Young eyes flashed bright in the morning sun,
And sunny curls danced out,
As the youth of the village, every one,
Passed by with a gladdening shout.
Not all—for alone by the old barn side,
Where the warmest sunshine lay,
Sat the little sufferer, true and tried,
The Cripple on Christmas Day.

Many a day I had marked him well
With the crooked and withered limb,—
When the summer sun on the bright world fell,
Bringing no light to him ;—

As he looked on the play he could not share,
Or limped on his crutch and cane ;--
And thought how ill the spirit could bear
The weight of his endless chain—
To be bound forever to toiling steps,
To be shut forever aside,
When the laugh rang out from merry lips,
And the world was open and wide.
And again he sat, when the last had gone,
When his mates were off and away,
The little sufferer, all alone,
The Cripple on Christmas Day.

Poor boy ! He played on the frozen ground
With the end of his pointed cane,
And I heard him try, with a pitiful sound,
To sing a boyish strain ;
And he tried to hold the big round tears
That trembled down his check,
For he had the soul of older years,
Though his little heart was weak.
But he thought again of his playmates' call,
And his head drooped on his breast :
Ah, who, when the clouds of sorrow fall,
Beareth his grief the best ?

A stranger stopped in his heavy tread,
As he hurried down the way,
And I saw him raise the bending head
Of the Cripple, on Christmas Day.

God bless the heart of man, that still,
In its struggle for power and gold,
Has human love, and a kindly will,
For the helpless and the old !
The stranger's coat was poor and worn,
I know that his purse was small,
But he gave him the toys he had bought that morn,
To take home to his children all.
And the gifts that fell from the stranger's hand,
And the joy in the poor boy's eye,
Were things set down, by God's command,
In the records of the sky.
Still light will fall on the darkest place,
If patience will hope and pray,
Like the smile that lit up the sorrowful face
Of the Cripple, on Christmas Day.

THE PICTURE OF THE ABSENT.

It was worth but little, yesterday,
When *she* was here—earth's choicest blessing—
With the smile that won all hearts away,
And the kiss that met our fond caressing.
It was only a memory, weak and faint,
Traced by the sun as he loved to linger—
Of a lip and a cheek no hand could paint,
No sculptor mould but God's own finger.

It is more to-day—oh ! how much more !
Vain for its price the gold so sterling !
It glows with beauties hidden before,
For it fills the place of our absent darling.
The hills are high, and the rivers are wide—
They hide away our fairest and dearest :
We spring to her picture with love and pride,
For looking upon it brings her nearest.

It may be dearer yet, some day,
When, ferried over a darker river,
Our last kiss pressed on that sacred clay—
We have parted from our darling forever.
For then it will give us a double view—
Of the form that once to our love was given—
And of that which never mortal knew—
How looks one angel up in Heaven !



THE CALL OF THE BELL.

An Outcast's Story.

It is twenty years—long twenty years—
Twenty years of sorrow and wrong—
Since my eyes have been wet with loving tears,
Or my heart known one impulse strong.
My hair that was black is flecked with gray,
My cheek is hollow and wan :
Martin Dale has been long away—
Who sorrowed that he was gone ?

Was there one ? Who knows ? My blood was fire,
And iron was my hand :
Even my good old gray-haired sire
Held over me no command.
I left him one day, 'mid curses and blows,
Hell rioting in my brain :
Ere night, the mountains between us rose—
We never met again.

Over the sea, when years had fled,
I heard his pleading call :
“Come back, my son, before I am dead !
I have forgiven all !”
I tore that letter in fragments fine,
My heel on his name I set :
Did he think that the heart of a boy was mine ?
That *I* could forgive and forget ?

Come back ? No, no ! the gulf was broad
’Tween me and all my kind,
Save the mocking defiers of virtue and God,
With guilt and passion blind.
I rioted on—I ran my course—
I filled my cup of crime :
Nothing remained that was fouler or worse,
Till I closed accounts with Time !

Another letter :—’twas not from *him* ;
It bore a stranger’s seal :
The old man’s heart, with his writing dim,
I had crushed beneath my heel.
He slept in the shade of the old church spire—
He slept, and I was glad !—
For it seemed, while he lived, my veins of fire
Grew every day more mad.

Years—years—more years : no check—no stay
In my blind and hot career :
My life was burning, eating away,
And the death of the hopeless near.
My native land was over the sea ;
It was not a whit too wide
To hold apart my life and me,
My ruin and my pride.

Yet I am here. You marvel well
What hand rung out the call !
I tell you I heard that old church-bell,
Over land, and sea, and all !
A thousand leagues but lent it force,
And it pierced through wall and dome !
That bell of my childhood stopped my course :
That bell has called me home.

You will call me mad—well, be it so !
You will say it cannot be :—
That a church bell's sound could never go
O'er a thousand leagues of sea.
I tell you I heard it—clear and sweet—
I could swear to its every tone,
Just as twenty years since it called my feet
Over that threshold stone.

My father's grave—I see it rise
All green and sodden there :
Do you mark how very close it lies
To the foot of the belfry stair ?
Do you think—yes, yes, you may start and glance,
As if each could understand—
Do you think that bell might not, perchance,
Have been rung by a dead man's hand ?

You shake your heads—you only see
What close in your vision lies :
The eternal world has opened for *me*,
Unsealing ears and eyes.
That bell has called me over the wave—
My wronged sire's last behest ;—
Martin Dale but asks a grave—
Give it, and let him rest !

A DIRGE IN LIFE.

I FEEL the shadow of thy death
Approaching every day,
I know that I shall miss thy breath
And see thy lifeless clay ;
I know that they will soon consign
To dust and worms thy form,
But dare not take thy hand in mine
While yet that hand is warm.

I know those eyes, whose pleading gaze
Has ne'er to me been cold,
Death's long unbroken sleep will glaze
Before the year is old ;
But never must one look of love
Be past between us more,
Though lightning fast the days will move,
That bear thee from the shore.

Oh lost by fate in years gone by !
By death in years to be !—
This sad wail only till I die
Must tell the world of thee.
Farewell ! our parting is begun,
Thy burial words are said ;
All that thou wert to me is done,
I can but think thee dead.



A FAREWELL IN DEATH.

Not as when of old we parted,
With a sweet though saddened pain,
When we knew the tears that started,
Each for each should dry again ;
Not as when the blue sea only
Held apart our waiting souls,
Ah, a sea more dark and lonely—
Death's wide wave between us rolls.

In no garments have they decked thee
To pursue an earthly track
From whose course we yet expect thee,
To our fond hearts coming back :
Ah, there speaks no home returning,
In thy folded robes of snow :
Quenched must be the watchlight's burning,
In the death-mist dark and low.

Never, through the mist of ages,
Shall my fond words come to thee,
Nor thy heart, on sunny pages,
Send a greeting home to me.
Oh, to breathe one word of sorrow
To thy spirit far away !
Oh, to see thy face to-morrow—
Even as it lies to-day !

Farewell now ; there's no caressing,
In this heavy gloom and fear ;
Fond embrace and farewell blessing,
Sink in doubt and darkness here ;
God be with thee, lost and dearest,
In thy midnight dark and blind ;
And to him, oh God, be nearest,
For whom none is left behind !

THE OLD KNIGHT'S TREASURE.

SIR JOHN was old, and grim, and gray ;
The cares of sixty years he bore :
The charm of youth had withered away
From his iron features, long before.
In his dull old house of blackened stone,
With servants quaint, and tried, and few—
For many a year he had lived alone,
As the harsh and the cold and the heartless do.

There was plate on his sideboard—plate of price;
His pouch had ruddy gold at need ;
And twenty men might well suffice
The lands he held by dower and deed.
He had lived—the world said—much too long,
Had sold his heart for wealth and power ;
And tales, they thought, of bygone wrong,
Would be wailed, too late, at his dying hour.

Beside the bed of grim Sir John—
The quaint old faded bed of state
Where in the centuries dead and gone
Had slept gray heads with a diadem's weight—
Beside his bed, and near at hand
To his easy chair of oaken wood,
Fastened and strapped with bar and band,
A huge black casket ever stood.

No friend of his—they were far and few—
Had ever seen the opened lid ;
Not even the tongue of a servant knew
What thing of wealth the casket hid.
'Twas rumored that at dead of night,
When shut and barred were window and door,
It opened to the old man's sight ;
But that was a rumor—nothing more.

Eyes glanced upon it, quick and keen,
And minds with doubt impatient swelled :
What could these years of mystery mean ?
What could be the wealth the casket held ?
'Twas wondrous wealth—so much knew all ;
For these bold words the covering crossed :
“Remember, all, if harm befall,
Save *this*, whatever else is lost !”

Perhaps the red gold nestled there,
Loving and close as in the mine ;
Or diamonds lit the sunless air,
Or rubies blushed like bridal wine.
Some giant gem, like that which bought
The half of a realm in Timour's day,
Might here, beyond temptation's thought,
Be hidden in safety : who could say ?

Sir John was dead. The needy heirs
Followed close and thick behind his bier,
Blending disgust at the tedious prayers
With a proper sob and a decorous tear.
And scarce the sound of feet had died,
Closing the vault for his mouldering rest—
When rung the chisel—opening wide
That strange old guarded treasure chest.

What found they ? Faces darkened and frowned,
And curses smothered under the breath,
As the heavy lid was at last unbound,
And the heirs expectant looked beneath.
Not an acre—not a banquet more
Would all the wealth of the casket buy !
No wonder their faces this anger wore—
That curled the lip and flashed the eye.

What found they ? Top, and whip, and ball,
And knife, and cord—each veriest toy
That makes, through years of childhood, all
The merrier life of the bright-eyed boy !
For thirty years that lonely man
Had held, oh, dearer than honors won—
Than the wealth that into his coffers ran—
The toys of his buried baby son !

Oh, human love ! oh, human grief !
Ye make your places wide and far !
Ye rustle in every withered leaf,
Ye are heard, perhaps, where the angels are !
In the coldest life may rise some wail
O'er broken hopes and memories fond :
God help us, when we set the pale
That leaves one human heart beyond !

LOVING ALONE.

MARY, dear, it is time we should part ;
Seas should roll between us twain ;
Nothing less will calm my heart,
Nothing less will cool my brain !
Long enough has this folly held—
Bitterest folly ever known—
The purest hopes from a true heart welled,
To sink in the desert of Loving Alone !

Very bright are the eyes I see ;
Very sweet is the voice I hear ;
And still they will make a fool of me,
As they've done, my darling, many a year.
I can spare no more of my treasures now—
To be slighted and mocked by those lips of
stone ;
There are silver hairs upon my brow,
I must break this habit of Loving Alone !

I must find some lip that the words I speak
Will answer tenderly back to mine—
Some heart whose love will flush the cheek
With a richer, purer current than wine.
These must be mine, or never more
Shall the sea where your winter of scorn has
blown,
Break in summer waves to the laughing shore ;—
There is winter and death in Loving Alone !

Treasure carefully, Mary, dear,
All my words of hope and trust ;
They'll be something worth to wake a sneer
When the lips that spoke are in the dust.
And the day may come when the poison draught
From mine commended to your own—
One more may laugh as you have laughed,
And the bliss be yours of Loving Alone !

No ! the smile has lost its charm !
Powerless now are the words of art ;
Nothing but love tones, true and warm,
Can open again my closing heart !
Are they mine ? Ah, Mary, dear,
How much of bliss might each have known,
Had the tongue spoken true to the waiting ear,
Had I known that I was not Loving Alone !

GOING TO GREENWOOD.

MARY and I were going together
Down to Greenwood's City of Rest ;—
Going down, in the summer weather,
Where slept the friends we had loved the best.

I had a sister, loved and cherished,
Waiting there my day of doom ;—
Mary two babes that together perished
Like twin roses in their bloom.

Green, we knew, was the grass above them,
Bright the flowers, like Heaven's tears,
Scattered by hands we had taught to love them,
Every sunny day for years.

Mary and I were going together—
Some bright day—as dear friends come
With the cheerful smile of sunny weather—
To visit our dead in their quiet home.

We would sit fair flowers wreathing
For the marble overhead ;
Hearing the birds sing, as if breathing
Our own love for the early dead.

Mary and I—through all the seasons
Set we times for our pilgrim day ;—
Hindered yet by a hundred reasons,
Till the summer had passed away.

Autumn is here with its voice of wailing,
Greenwood's walks are bleak and bare :
Nature's beauty is sinking, failing ;
Mary has gone before me there.

The City of Rest has a fair new comer ;
O'er Mary's grave the sad winds moan :
When the skies are bright, next summer,
I shall go to Greenwood alone.

THE CRY FOR GOLD.

I WOULD that I could coin my heart—
My very heart to gold ;
I care not if my hair grew gray,
My very pulse grew cold ;
I care not if to-morrow's sun
Looked on me worn and old.

I would that I could cast away
This gnawing, cankering fear
That haunts me, even in my sleep—
Of want approaching near,
And penury beside my bed,
Whispering in my ear.

I would be miser—robber—all
That crime can be, for wealth ;
Would feel e'en hunger's gnawing pang ;
Would eat a crust by stealth ;
Would let disease feed on my cheek,
If gold would come for health.

I would all this, and this has been
The teaching of the world :
For I have seen how sneering lips
Upon the poor are curled ;
Seen how detraction, shame and scorn,
By richer hands are hurled.

It is not in my nature. I
Have tears for others' shame ;
And I have shared my humble store
With those of humble name
Who came to me in want and wo,
And had no other claim.

None shares with me a single drop
From the heart's wealth of tears ;
None gives what I alone have asked—
Green hearts for greener years ;
And will not this be still my lot
When youth, my staff, outwears ?

Will they not turn me backward hands
When I implore for bread ;
And heap a wealth of scornful names,
Unbought upon my head ;
And keep their pity for my grave,
When I am with the dead ?

I would not trust them. I have seen
Enough to make me sure
That it is crime to be in grief,
And cursed to be poor ;
And that, when we would ask for smiles,
Gold is the only lure !

There is a shadow at my side,
And with a double name—
Known to the victims of his power,
As Poverty and Shame ;
A spirit with relentless hand,
That ne'er gives up a claim.

I know that he will hold me here,
A famished wolf, ere long ;
And make me as a pointing mark
For all this mighty throng ;
And chill the course of holy love,
And break the harp of song.

I would that I could coin my heart—
My very heart to gold ;
I care not if my hair grew gray,
My very pulse grew cold,
Could I once dare and once defy
That spectre grim and old.

THE WRECKER'S CHILD.

THE WRECKER sits on the rocky beach,
While high the storm-waves beat and roll,
While a higher gust succeeds to each,
And the lightning is flashing from pole to pole ;
While a stranded ship, almost in reach,
Is perishing, freighted with many a soul.

His boat is not where it ought to be,
Stemming the waves till it welter down,
Its owner, with arm so strong and free,
Saving the scores that strangle and drown :
It lies, near by, in a headland's lee,
And he sits idle with mutter and frown.

Why flies he not, as he flew of old,
To succor the perishing children of fate ?
There have fallen on his name harsh words and cold,
That spring from recklessness or hate ;—
He has been called a wrecker for gold,
When he strove to succor, early and late.

“They call me a pirate, if I come near
The stranded vessels !” the wrecker said.
“I will not bide their ignorant sneer,
Nor toil for honor, with shame instead ;
Let them take their chance, who are stranded here !”
And he turned away with a careless tread.

The night wore on, and the morning broke :
On the same wild spot the wrecker stands ;
But he speaks not now as before he spoke—
He beats his forehead, and wrings his hands,
And his heart rises up till he needs must choke,
As he sees a form on the wet beach sands.

His boy was on board that fated bark,
His child has perished with none to save ;
Against his child rolled his mutterings dark
In that night of horror over the wave.
God help the wrecker ! and ye who mark—
Deny not the strength your Maker gave.

AN INVOCATION BY THE SEA.

BEAT on the white beach, restless sea,
With silver flash and thundering roar :
Type us the mighty and the free,
And let our dull lives rust no more.
Cool from the brain its fever heat :
Rouse up our pulses sinking low :
The Eternal walks thee with his feet
As once, two thousand years ago.

Our aims are narrowed to a thread :
Our truth is dwindled to a spark :
Our better lives are dull and dead :
Our hope of heaven is faint and dark.
Along the hot and dusty ways
There springs no great thought in the soul :
Raise us, oh sea, above our days !
Thy surf some blessing onward roll !

The barks we freighted years ago

With hopes that deepest burn and thrill —
Come back, oh God ! how sad and slow !—

We're watching, waiting, hoping still !
No, no ! all cannot foundered be !

Some must come back, though long we wait !
Give us some token yet, oh sea—
Some hopeful token of their fate.

Bring us some glory in thy spray,

From all the hoards of gems and gold
For ages cropped and stored away—

The wrecks of navies new and old !
Flash up some feeling through thy brine,
From all earth's noblest and her best—
From all the energies divine

Whose grave has been within thy breast !

Thou answerest not, eternal sea !

Thy wave is voiceless to our ears ;
Unless thy moan an answer be—

That ceaseless moan of all time's years.
Thy thunder may be Sybil speech

To those who hear with reverent awe,
And every wave some lore may teach
To those who well the lesson draw.

Beat on our hearts thy thunder tone,
And startle us from pleasure's sleep !
Break up the stagnant dullness grown
Around us—till we smile and weep !
Lave us with kisses that no more
From mothers' lips our own may bear :
Sound anthems from the Better Shore
That yet, perchance, may call us there !



MY STEERAGE GIRL.

Oh beauty in squalor, in dirt and rags !—

Oh ugliness hidden in velvet and lace !—

There's an eye, sometimes, that the covering drags
From the prisoned glories of form and face.

Then diamonds glow in the humblest tears ;

Then fades the grace of the papered curl ;

And then I look back through a dozen of years,
And think again of my steerage girl.

I found her one day in the motley crew

Of the steerage berths in a packet ship ;—

Where faces with hunger were gaunt and blue,
And suffering murmured in eye and lip.

A greasy candle with sputtering wick

She held at the ladder, lighting me down ;—

The grime on her round cheeks gathered thick,
And little bare feet of a dirty brown.

Oh steerage girl !—little steerage girl !—

A queer little thing she was, I trow,
To set my senses all in a whirl,

But that was long—very long ago :
And I saw such diamond flashes break
Out from the dirt of that crusted gem,
That for her, once washed and heart-awake,
One might lose—if he had it—a diadem.

Such wondrous tints in her golden hair—

(It was matted, and tangled, and crazily wild,)
Such flashes of white in the bosom bare—

(Remember, oh prude, she was only a child !)
Such a rosebud mouth—such a rounded cheek—

Such springing graces of supple form—
What a heaven of bliss did they all bespeak,
When a year or two more should ripen and warm !

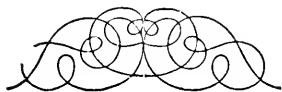
Alas ! for I lost her !—Was it a loss

To her or to me ? We parted there.
But a moment joined, our fates ran cross
When I mounted again the rickety stair.

Whatever had destiny ordered below

For my steerage beauty, I sadly missed :
Lost angel of squalor—I do not know
If she ever was washed—or ever was kissed !

But sometimes when ugliness overpaints,
Or beauty lies hidden in rags or in grime,
I wonder if Poverty's guardian saints
Have kept her from suffering, sorrow and crime.
The Future is always voiceless and grim,
And the Past is growing as silent a churl ;
Else I sometimes would ask it, though years grow dim,
To tell me the fate of my steerage girl.



“I THINK THOU ART IN HEAVEN.”

I THINK thou art in Heaven ;
I know thou shouldst be there,
With God's own glory set like stars
Amid thy clustering hair ;
With garments, like thy spirit,
Of pure and spotless white,
And eyes that draw from others now,
What here they gave us—light.

I think thou art in Heaven—
Oh, where ! if thou art not,
Will be, when we have passed away,
Our sad and weary lot ?
Ah ! if we should not meet thee,
The Heaven we deem so fair
Will have no kindly smile for us—
No voice to call us there.

BEAUTY AND CRIME.

I SEE thee, as some fallen star
Dropped downward from the highest heaven,
To which—once breathing from afar
Our highest, happiest prayers were given :—
When thou, throned in the blue serene
Of spotless purity and truth,
Made age's memory longer green,
And bounded in the pulse of youth.

I know a sapphire on thy brow
Once to our gazing beamed and burned :
Thy sunny hair—so faded now—
To chords for minstrel harps was turned.
Thou wert above us once, in all
That Heaven's own signet-mark could give :
Oh God ! that such as thou can fall !
The quick soul die, the body live !

Thy radiance is no more a star
To beam in beauty o'er the world :—
A meteor now, that yet afar
Beckons the lost from Heaven hurled ;
A thing to see with shuddering gaze,
To pass with hushed and bated breath,
To shun as lightning's lurid blaze,
To shrink from as the hand of death !

God pity thee—oh fearful one !
More fearful in thy beauty bright
Than if, all lost and all undone,
Thy forehead wore a Gorgon's fright !
God pity us—who feel thy chain
Creep, burning, round our shivering limbs,
Till blissful tortures mock the brain,
And every sense in madness swims !

God pity thee—as man will not !
The fate of Mary yet be thine—
To see, beneath Christ's brow of thought,
His tenderest eyes with tear-drops shine !
And yet, perchance—thy ransomed soul
Singing on high as Mary sings—
Thou mayest, to us, who miss the goal,
Wave drops of pity from thy wings.

RIDING BY RAIL.

BORNE on the breath of the iron steed,
Hurrying on with a headlong speed
Through the mountain, and over the mead.

Is it blinding hate and ire—
Is it the force of wild desire
That drives like the wind our steed of fire?

Comes there over the lengthening plain
A neigh from his mate—that with loosened rein,
He bounds, as the maniac starts from his chain?

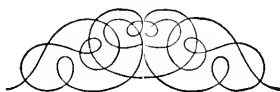
No ! 'tis a power thrice as great
As the mettled horse with his love clate—
That drives on our steed like a winged fate.

A power mighty for good or ill,
Binding the world with force and skill ;—
'Tis the terrible might of human will !

What if the hot rails hiss beneath ?
What if the dread speed stifles our breath,
Or we spring, with a crash, to the arms of death ?

On ! we must on ! humanity drives
With a force that recks not a thousand lives ;
We cannot pause till the goal arrives !

Go faster ! faster ! It must be so !
Even this flying speed is slow
While mind with the lightning's flash must go !



MY CHRISTMAS GUEST.

I.

“COME home to us, Walter !” Sybil said,
As my parting words on her quick ear fell,
And I turned away with a laggard tread—
When I bade her sadly my last farewell :
“Come home to us, whatever betide ;
Let your gay companions urge and plead,
But lay your merry life aside,
And come to those who love you indeed.
The Christmas bells will be ringing low,
But you can hear them, leagues away ;
You will think of me—you will come, I know—
Come, Walter, be with us on Christmas Day !”

II.

Her thin white hand was clasped in mine,
Her golden ringlets brushed my cheek ;
Some feeling I could scarce divine
Choked up my throat as I tried to speak :

“I will come—yes, Sybil, look for me,
No matter what bonds I may need to break ;
No fetter like this fair hand can be ;
I will come—I will come, for *your* dear sake !
But Sybil”—why did that feeling rise
And choke me again as I spoke the word ?
What glimpse was opened to my eyes
Of that future of which no ear hath heard ?
“But Sybil, what if I come in vain ?
Will *you* be here, love, if I come ?
Remember that *you* supply the chain !
You only can call the truant home !”

III.

“*I!*” and the large blue heavenly eyes
Had a look I never had marked before—
A blending of doubt and of sad surprise,
Showing my words had touched her sore :—
“I? why Walter, where *could* I be,
At Christmas time, but here, and with you ?”
Where? oh heaven, why could I see
Your records firm with an eye so true?
I could not speak the thought I felt—
I could only press her dear, soft hand,
That seemed within my own to melt
Like a snow-flake in a summer land ;

And I said : "Yes, Sybil, I was wrong !
You will be here, and I will return
To hear you sing your Christmas song,
While merry the holiday fires shall burn !"
I pressed a kiss on her fair white brow,
I turned away and opened the door,
But she followed me—sad and tearful now,
To speak that darling "one word more."
"Come back, oh Walter ! come back !" she said,
"Come back, whatever chance betide ;
And Sybil, be sure, alive or dead,
Will be here, and sitting by your side."
The door between us closed—oh fate !
We know not the good or the ill in store !
Till opens or shuts heaven's golden gate
We parted, with that closing door !

IV.

I heard from Sybil at Summer's close,
I heard from her when Autumn came ;
They said her cheek was like a rose,
And less fragile now was her fragile frame.
She was better, now—growing well and strong—
I should see her rosy before the Spring :
And I hugged the sweet dream well and long
That Hope so fanned with her flattering wing.

The bolt fell at last from a clearing sky :

She was well—she was dying—she was dead !
So close the tidings seemed to fly

That I did not reach her dying bed.

“Come home !” they wrote—then bade me stay,

That time might soothe my dumb despair,
Ere I came to find her vanished away—

To gaze on her empty room and chair.

They did not know how faithfully

She had promised to keep our Christmas tryst—
Had promised that she would come to *me*,
Though all the world her presence missed !

V.

Then came a time of living death :

I was dead, at least, to the world I saw,
Though yet my hated vital breath

The law of my nature bade me draw.

The smile had died upon my face,

The speech had died upon my tongue :—
Like some lost atom, bred in space,

On the margin of the world I hung.

There were kindly steps around my bed,

And voices speaking hushed and low,
And one—it was the leech, they said—

Who seemed to count my every throe.

Then I grew better, and the light
Came once more to my darkened eyes,
And I saw—though I scarce could bless the sight—
There was beauty, yet, in earth and skies.
Then pale and broken, and very sad,
I crept to my study-chambers again,
And forgot, sometimes, the grief I had,
As the lore of the past came crowding my brain.

VI.

A little while—it was Christmas time ;
I went to meet Sybil ;—do not start—
To doubt her word had been worse than crime,
And one suspicion had broken my heart.
I opened the door where we parted last—
There were faces there that met me with tears ;
They knew how had perished my golden past—
They knew how were clouded my coming years.
But they did not see the sunny face
That over the doorway beckoned me in,
Nor the form that I clasped in a long embrace—
They saw but the dim air pale and thin.
They did not hear the soft low tones
That crept to my ear from those lips of air—
Plaintive and soft as the wind harp owns,
But welcome as heaven answering prayer.

And when before the Christmas fire
I drew a low chair to my side,
And gazed upon it with long desire—
Such as belongs to a promised bride—
I heard them whisper in corners low,
Touching their foreheads in grief sincere :—
“Poor Walter ! he is crazed, you know !
He almost thinks that Sybil is here !”

VII.

I had her plate beside my own,
When we sat at the table day by day ;
But her viands were things of air alone,
And smiling she waved our food away.
But when I lay on my lonely bed,
She came to me without a fear,
Nestled beside me her sunny head,
And sealed my brow with her kisses dear.
She lingered with me, blessing and blest,
Till the first bell rung in the midnight wan—
The knell of the old year gone to rest :
Then suddenly—silently—Sybil was gone !
But she left me with love and hope renewed,
And the lips were sacred that *she* had kissed :
Less bitter the tears her grave that 'dewed,
For Sybil had kept her Christmas tryst.

VIII.

The years have brought me rest and peace ;
They have given me one my life who shares
With all the matron beauty and grace
Ever given to mortal hopes and prayers.
I have children gathering at my knee,
I have pride—and the world ne'er calls me mad :
But the years take nothing away from me
Of the strange wild faith that once I had.
And Sybil comes at Christmas time—
Smiles, though another lie on my breast :
Her spirit broods in this lonely rhyme—
My ever welcome Christmas Guest !



THE BURSTING OF TEARS.

I HAD taken the lore of Grecian schools,
I had dwelt with the minds of old,
I had sought to live by the Cynic rules,
I had learned to be harsh and cold,
To think the Epicureans fools,
And harden my natural mould.

I had thought no grief could bow me down,
No sorrow cloud my eye ;
I had thought I could even grasp a crown
Bright as the heaven on high,
And lose it again without a frown,
And whistle the bauble by.

I had thought that my own white-bosomed girl
Might grow as false as fair,
And play with my heart, as I with a curl
Of her own golden hair ;
And I could be proud as a belted earl,
And leave her without a prayer.

I had thought that death could sweep them all—
The dearest of my kind,
As the faded leaves in Autumn fall,
Leaving not one behind,
And I could hear the last death call
With a firm, untroubled mind.

But I have learned a lesson deep,
In a few short changing years ;
A lesson that over the heart will creep
When the brightest life appears ;
A lesson that I shall ever keep,
And that is the bursting of tears !

For I had woven an humble crown
Of the poet's poor bay leaves,
Wrought out at night when the stars went down,
And woven in summer's eves ;—
As poor a wreath as the gartered clown
In the merry circus weaves.

But one by one the leaves were shorn
By envious hands away,
The crown from my weary brow was torn :
Not one poor simple bay
Was left, of all I had won and worn,
And I wept them many a day.

My bright-eyed girl grew false and cold,
And change was over her heart ;
She cared no more, as she cared of old,
That we were far apart :
They said she was won by a stranger's gold
And wed to a stranger's art.

Then I bowed me down in the very dust,
And I gave away my pride,
My heart forgot to hope and trust,
And I wished that I had died
Before the hot tears had ever burst—
That on my cheeks were dried.

And one of the few who loved me well
Lay down on a dying bed ;
I saw the death-shadow as it fell,
And I pillowed her weary head,
And I heard them ringing her funeral knell,
And they told me that she was dead.

I have never yet outlived my grief,
And I know that I never will :
I have cast off the pride of the Indian chief,
And the Grecian Stoic's chill,
For they never give my sorrows relief,
And the heart will not be still.

And I have learned a lesson deep,
That mocks at the Cynic sneers :—
That, chain the heart, and it yet will leap
And bound to its hopes and fears ;
That over us all a shadow will creep,
And that is the bursting of tears !



“TURN NOT AWAY.”

IF a voice from the far and happy land
 Ever echoed over thy cradle bed,
If a mother's voice and a mother's hand
 Ever laid a blessing upon thy head ;
If a golden truth from the sacred page
 Ever was thine in an earlier day,
And still clings on in thy riper age,
 Turn not away.

If hope beat high when thy youth began—
 Bright hope and love for thy human kind,
And cares have prest on the heart of man
 Till love is weary and hope is blind ;
If still one star of all the host
 Burns with an old remembered ray,
Believe not all thy life is lost,
 Turn not away.

If sickness calls thee with feeble cry,
Or suffering moans from its bed of pain ;
If a pleading comes from the sunken eye,
Or madness shrieks from the fevered brain ;
Oh, watch as the angels watch above !
Oh, pray for them as the angels pray !
Bring heart and hand to the labor of love :
Turn not away.

If poverty stands at thy cottage door—
Squalid poverty, faint and weak,
Begging a crust from thy little store,
Or the poor cheap rest that the weary seek ;
Remember thou that the mighty wheel
Of fortune changes, day by day :
Never be deaf to the poor's appeal ;
Turn not away.

If thy brother fall in the slippery path,
And his hands are stained with human sin,
If the sword of the world is raised in wrath,
And no city of refuge invites him in ;
If his pitiful cry comes up to thee,
Remember that all men go astray ;
Still let thy heart his refuge be,
Turn not away.

If life grow dark as thy years roll by,
And heaven is wrapt in cloud and storm,
Oh, still look up with a trusting eye,
For a beckoning smile from an angel form ;
So shall thy heart keep its holy laws,
Fulfilling its mission day by day,
And God, when thou pleadest thy final cause,
Turn not away.



THE GIFT OF LIFE.

UPON our hearts most heavily
Had fallen at last the bitter stroke :
The sunniest eyes that ever smiled
Slept their long sleep and never woke,
And bowed we were, as if the sea
Upon our heads unsheltered broke.

The mist and shadow of our grief
Lay dark upon the future track :
We knew not that the coming years
With kindly breath should roll it back,
And memory's star was hidden yet
Behind the mountains cold and black.

Oh God, from whom our idols come !
Oh God, whose power takes away !
The heart of man will bend with grief
Beside the dull earth's common clay—
And where had grief a pause for her
Who silent in her coffin lay ?

The dead and I were left alone
Within the cold and silent room ;
The flickering lamp its pale light shed
Over the sleeper in the gloom,
And made the shadows on the wall
Strange shapes and ghostly forms assume.

My brain was weary and unnerved,
My heart had sunk beneath its weight,
Till I repined at God's behest,
And murmured words against my fate,
And thought that Heaven had done us wrong
To leave us all so desolate.

I prayed—it was an impious prayer,
And yet I prayed with fervent breath,
That my weak hand but once might hold
The power of Him of Nazareth,
The power to move the breath of life,
The might to loose the bonds of death.

I prayed—I slept—and in my sleep
I still prayed on that impious prayer,
That had no word or sign of hope,
But stronger grew for its despair,—
To change the eternal law of God,
And let my soul the forfeit bear.

I slept,—and we were not alone,
The dead and I ;—I saw the face
Of the death angel, whose strong hand
Has scourged with grief the human race;
I saw his tall majestic shape
Filling with awe that silent place.

Not with the bare and skeleton form,
Making the very blood turn cold ;
Not with the pointed javelin,
As ever drawn in legends old ;
Not with the harsh and bending brow,
With stony eyes beneath it rolled ;

But with a face of holy light,
Saddened by human suffering,
A form of grace and majesty,
With sable robes and midnight wing ;
The Messenger alone was there,
But not the Conqueror or the King.

“Thou wouldst,” he said, “one moment hold
The power of Life and Death—’tis thine !
Once only unto human hands
My fearful sceptre I resign ;
Thou hast the Gift of Life—recall
The doom at which thou wouldst repine.”

I grasped the wand and forward sprang
With heart on fire and brow elate,
But calmly on my shoulder pressed
His finger, and again I sate ;
“Learn first,” he said, “ what thou wouldst do ;
Read first the book of human fate.

“Died she in deep and bitter sin ?
Died she with no eternal trust ?—
Scourged to the hour of doom and death,
Dust only, turning unto dust ?”
“Thou knowest,” I said, “ that she was pure,
Thou knowest her soul is with the just !”

“Thou hast, for her, some happy land,
Some glorious spot, some sunny clime,
Fenced out, by more than mortal care,
From bitter grief and blackening crime,
Where want’s bleak winds are felt no more,
Nor fall the withering frosts of time ?”

“There is no spot, oh mocking shade,
Where smiles the sun of joy alone ;—
No spot from whence arises not
Affliction’s wail and sorrow’s moan ;—
No spot beneath the bounds of Heaven
Where winter winds are never blown.

“The trees we plant with cheerful hand,
The flowers we water with our tears—
Forget their bloom before the snow
Comes down with age upon the years ;
Our sunny morns are dusky gloom
Before the starry night appears.

“Our voyages on the summer sea
Are ended when the tempests blow,
And hearts, and lives, and fortunes change,
As beat the rough waves to and fro ;
And thou—oh, could we stay thy might,
She had not died who lies so low.”

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“What hast thou then,” the spirit said,
“To tempt returning souls again ?
What canst thou give for Heaven’s own rest
But an eternity of pain ?
What is our grief for all the lost,
But for the living who remain ?

“I bear the curses of the world ;
I am the terror of mankind ;
Performing only, year by year,
The work of love by God assigned,
I yet am hated as a fiend,
And cursed by passion dark and blind.

“I smite but when the Father speaks ;
I scourge but when the Master wills.
Against the balance of my power
Set all the store of human ills,
And pause, before the mind of man
Measures the duty Death fulfills.

“The tree is fallen—if thine eyes
Can pierce the future’s misty veil,
If thou canst fence her soul from sin,
Her body with impervious mail,—
Her years of life shall roll again,
And only with the ages fail. ,

“The tree is fallen—in the hand
Of the great God its falling lies ;
She sleepeth well, until the light
Of Heaven shall burst upon her eyes :
Now, if thou wilt, approach her side,
And say unto the dead, ‘arise !’”

Still for the lost the tears of grief
From out my stricken heart were shed,
But low before the Messenger
I bowed in reverend awe my head—
“Take back thy fearful sceptre now !
Take back the Gift of Life !” I said.

No more, oh God, let us repine
O'er closing tomb and shrouded urn :
Teach us that in the spirit land
More bright the stars of love shall burn ;
Teach us to think upon the lost,
But pine no more for their return.



CARDS AND WINE.

THREE tables in a gas-lit room,
Three parties gathered there ;
What wasted life ! what saddening gloom !
What cause for grief—and prayer !

At one the players greedily
Are marking ten and ace,
With snarling words, and jestings free,
Harsh hand, and angry face.

The painted cards fall thick and fast,
As leaves in Autumn time ;
And every thick breath sounds a blast
Of gusty hate and crime.

The red gold rings, the silver chinks ;
The forehead's corded swell
Shows how each gamester inward drinks
The very air of hell.

Grief-bowed old fathers, murdered wives,
Robbed tills—before me pass ;
The suicides' end to guilty lives
I see as in a glass.

Bohemian glasses on the board
Mantle with blood-red wine ;
From vaults in far-off Europe stored
The golden sparkles shine.

Young lips, in boyish fullness yet,
The burning bubbles kiss ;
And as those drops the red lips wet,
I hear a serpent's hiss.

I see the tempter that shall blight
The worth of early years,
Crush every nerve of manhood's might,
And bring old age to tears.

I see the bleared and reddened eye,
The tangled, matted hair ;
The frenzy in which some shall die
Who drink the red wine there.

I see—oh God ! some manly hand
That knows not yet its bloom,
Manacled at the law's command,
Meeting a murderer's doom.

Three tables :—at the last there sits
A young man all alone,
Who looks and listens, as by fits
Those gusty words are blown ;—

Who shudders, as the dark cards fall,
And as the red wine foams,
And marks the ruin that, from all,
Shall burst on happy homes ;—

Who prays—the while his eyes are wet—
That God, for Christ's sweet sake,
From off the souls of man may yet
Those burning fetters break !

“GOING TO SEE SHARLIE !”

THREE years had sunned Kate's golden hair,
And given her eyes a deeper blue—
Had made her a never-ending care,
And a joy as constant, fresh and new.
She had taught us many a lesson of love,
With her blending of childish-woman ways,
And made us fear that the angels above
Loved her too well for length of days.

We left her one sunny morning at play
With her little mates, on the garden walk :
For an hour we heard her prattling away,
But we missed at last her childish talk.
The gate was open, and she was gone—
Gone ! we shuddered with fear and dread :
How many phantoms our hearts had drawn,
In a moment, to peril that sunny head.

Where had she gone ? With anxious gaze
We searched the garden, the yard, the street ;
But we saw no track in the trodden ways,
Of the dear and erring little feet.
One had seen her awhile before,
And heard her say in her childish tone,
She was "going to see her Sharlie once more,"
And when they looked they were left alone.

"Sharlie"—poor sister !—mortal sight
Never should see lost Charlotte again ;
For six long months on a sun-kissed height,
Sleeping in death had "Sharlie" lain.
But the childish word brought back our grief,
And it blent with our sad and sudden dread :
What if our joy should be so brief ?
What if they brought us our baby dead ?

Hour by hour we searched and wept—
We searched the river and dragged the brook,
Till the evening shadows over us crept,
And the last sad hope our hearts forsook.
Bitter—oh God ! it was bitter indeed,
That the hearts but half from their sorrow healed
Again so soon must be made to bleed—
Again so soon must an idol yield !

Was it the spirits that ever near
The children's heads their pinions wave—
Was it the thought of the sleeper there,
That called our steps to “Sharlie's” grave?
Weaving flowers on her grassy mound—
Heedless, all, of the setting sun—
Talking to her who lay under the ground—
There was our Kate, our darling one.

The children shouted—the strong men wept—
The women lavished their kisses like rain :
And oh, that night in our arms she slept,
Dearer than ever before or again !
More than a mile her little feet,
“Going to see Sharlie,” had borne her that day !
How had she kept that memory sweet ?
How to that grave had she found her way ?

THE MEN OF THREE AGES.

1776—1812—1858.

THERE'S martial music in the street—a crowd are
passing by ;

I see the silken banners flaunting upward to the sky.

The boys are on the sidewalk—their shouts are in
my ear :

Who are they from so many throats that draw so loud
a cheer ?

A rank of manly forms goes by, with martial garb and
tread :

There's strength in every flashing eye, youth's crown on
many a head—

Such men as, when a word of wrong is heard on human
breath,

Will bear our nation's honor in battle to the death.

The men are here who ten years since, beneath a
burning sun,

The victories of a score of fields with Scott and
Taylor won.

What they have been and what can be, scarce know
we as they go,—

The every day familiars whose worth we count so low.

Ah ! who come next ? For hair of brown there's hair
of silver gray,

There's faltering in the footsteps along the stony way.

A cockade crowns the hat of peace ; some on their
crutches lean :

Who are those men whose pride of place is what they
once have been ?

The veterans of the second war that humbled England's
pride—

The men who fought with Scott and Brown—at Hull
and Perry's side :

The young men of our country once, the gray-haired
fathers now,

Wearing the faded laurel upon each silvered brow.

But see ! with quick and reverent haste let every head
be bare !

An open carriage passes—a hundred years are there !

The form close bent—the sightless eyes—the dull and
vacant gaze—

A veteran indeed is here—a man of other days.

A hundred years their great events upon his head have
poured :

'Tis eighty years since first he took the musket and the
sword.

He saw the blow that made us slaves—he saw our
freedom won !

Perhaps he stood with Gates or Greene, or spoke with
Washington !

He scarcely hears the plaudits, now, that ring from
street and square ;

His failing senses scarcely heed the sounds that rend
the air ;

Yet through the mists of age there fall some golden
gleams of thought,

Of an empire wide and mighty, by his generation
bought.

They all are here—three ages—one like a glimmering
spark ;—

One like a great flame waning, but broad enough to
mark ;

And one so plain and homelike, we scarcely heed its ray ;
The glowing of those altar fires which bless our homes
to-day.

Next year the pageant may be shorn of what is most
its pride—

The centennarian sleeping by his buried comrades'
side ;—

Time's foot may tread the remnant of the olden cen-
tury's fires,

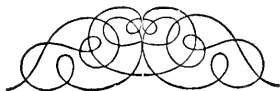
And from the second war alone date all our country's
sires.

Look, look your last, ye favored ones who see these
ages three,

And tell it to your kindred when grandsires you may
be :—

Once, to have shared our olden wars made many a
speaker's pride ;

'Tis honor now—those heroes—to have seen them ere
they died.



THE ENGLISH GIRL.

GAILY may dance the laughing eyes
Of the olive maids of Spain,
And Italy's girls 'neath Italy's skies
Still weave love's burning chain ;
Our skies may be less bright and blue,
Our Northern blood more cold—
But hearts are here as warm and true,
And forms of as glorious mould.

Earth has nothing of brighter bloom
Than the cheek of the English girl ;
The tropic groves have no perfume
Like the breath through those gates of pearl.
Nothing but Heaven can match the bliss
Hid in that bosom of snow—
Of the budding lips that wait a kiss,
And the sweet eyes drooping low.

In the tresses of her soft brown hair
A heart would captive lie,
And never care, as it nestled there,
That a world was passing by.
For her might falter a chief's last fight,
Or a monarch forfeit his crown,
And all be repaid in the loving light
From her soft eyes looking down.

The mother of a line of kings
That English girl might be,—
Might nurse a poet's baby wings,
Or suckle the Hope of the Free.
Nothing of Earth but would holy grow,
Locked in her gentle hand ;—
Nothing of Heaven but she might know—
A star in the seraph land.

Oh, glorious Anglo-Saxon blood—
Blood that nerved our sires—
Whether here or beyond the flood
May beat thy flashing fires—
Thou givest might, and thou givest will,
But thou givest beauty, too ;—
Such as raptures the wide world still,
And makes old Eden new.

Mars touched, long years ago, thy tide
With the tip of his burning spear,
And bade thee fill the veins of pride
For the masters of a sphere !
But a finger-tip of Venus pressed
Thy circling current the same ;
And nerving the warrior's iron breast,
Thou givest the lover's flame !

We may be free in line and land—
So let us be, or die !—
But captive yet to beauty's hand
We cannot choose but lie !
Fetter us—fetter us—heart and brain !
Bind us with eye and curl ;
And we will not seek to break thy chain,
Oh glorious English girl !

WASTED TIME.

ALONE in the dark and silent night,
With the heavy thoughts of a vanished year,
When evil deeds come back to sight,
And good deeds rise with a welcome cheer ;
Alone with the spectres of the past,
That come with the old year's dying chime,—
There glooms one shadow dark and vast,
The shadow of Wasted Time.

The chances of happiness cast away,
The opportunities never sought,
The good resolves that every day
Have died in the impotence of thought ;
The slow advance and the backward step
In the rugged path we have striven to climb,—
How they furrow the brow and pale the lip,
When we talk with Wasted Time.

What are we now ? what had we been,
Had we hoarded time as the miser's gold,
Striving ever our need to win,
Through the summer's heat and the winter's cold ;
Shrinking from nought that the world could do,
Fearing nought but the touch of crime,
Laboring, struggling, all seasons through,
And knowing no Wasted Time ?

Who shall recall the vanished years ?
Who shall hold back this ebbing tide
That leaves us remorse, and shame, and tears,
And washes away all things beside ?
Who shall give us the strength, e'en now,
To leave forever this holiday mime,
To shake off this sloth from heart and brow,
And battle with Wasted Time ?

The years that pass come not again,
The things that die no life renew ;
But e'en from the rust of this cankering chain
A golden truth is glimmering through :
That to him who learns from errors past,
And turns away with a strength sublime,
And makes each year outdo the last,—
There is no Wasted Time.

THE MOURNING ALBUM.*

As on some shore from which a bark
Has sailed, and foundered far at sea,
Some anxious friend goes round to mark
What tokens of the lost there be ;
So on this shore of life I stand—
From which the sea of death she crossed—
And gather, from each kindly hand,
What each can tell us of the lost.

The slightest memories that erewhile
Had called no light to cheek or brow,
A passing word, a look, a smile,
May fill the cup of memory now.
Give up, oh friends, with sad delight,
What each in heart has fondly shrined,
To her who has a mother's right
To all the dead has left behind.

*The album of a deceased daughter, sent round to her friends by the bereaved mother, to gather memorials—as is the custom in certain sections.

PEACE.

Peace, Peace—

Quiet, and rest, and silence, and shade !

What is our peace, oh spirit of mine ?

What are the thoughts in our memories laid,

That shall bring us the nearer this heavenly sign ?

What have we gathered, in youth or in age,

That has peace for its birth, or its life, or its close ?

Where have we read, upon forehead or page,

That the spirit of man ever feeleth repose ?

Peace, Peace—

Dream of the weary, the tired, and the lone,

Sought for and struggled for, weary and long ;

Prayed for, in suffering's feeblest moan,

Prayed for, amid the high bursting of song ;

Daylight, whose sunrise is ever delayed,

Evening, whose twilight fades not into night ;

Hope that the faithful has ever betrayed,

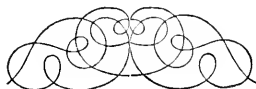
And the victim still grasps with a feverish might.

Peace, Peace—

Not in the forest, with solitude crowned,
Not in the world, with its bustle and care,
Not where wild mirth and rich music abound,
Not where the humble heart raises its prayer :
Not with the rich and their guerdon of gold,
Not with the poor and their bondage of toil,
Not with the chief, where his flag is unrolled,
Nor the sage bending over his midnight oil.

Peace, Peace—

Rest in the grave for the weary of soul !
Ah, who knoweth this, even, spirit of mine ?
Who knoweth but torments may change as they roll,
Or joy be unstable and fickle as wine ?
Who knoweth but peace is a stagnant pool,
And utter oblivion its only place,
And restless unquiet the mighty rule
That guides the spurred steed in the human race ?



A CRY IN THE DARK.

Oh, God ! thy creatures—what are they—
That every day some rosy veil,
From pleasant features torn away
Must show us corpses, dead and pale ?
That every heart we set to read
For love and virtue's hallowed lore,
Starts us with shapes of noxious breed—
Such as might haunt the Stygian shore ?

Is man forever doomed and cursed
By every passion that he bears—
One long weak dream, from last to first
His holiest hopes, his warmest prayers ?
Is every step but floundering on
O'er chaos to a doom unknown ;—
The light first glimmering—fading—gone ;
The soul with madness left alone ?

Why do we stretch our helpless hands
Above—yet grasp no chain of good ?
Why does wrong bind us with its bands,
And cast us in fate's whelming flood ?
Is the blue heaven of midnight stars
A mockery—to be wooed in vain ?
And fleck the sunlight's golden bars
Only a dungeon and a chain ?

Oh, hearts of guilt, and shame, and guile—
Ye fright me with your records dread :
Vipers more black than asps of Nile
Start up and sting at every tread !
I sit among the charnel bones
Once clothed with forms of truth and faith,
And seem to hear the ceaseless moans
That echo from the Land of Death !

Give me some power—Eternal Might !
To flee these phantoms of the dark ;
To leave these carrion birds of night,
And see above some daylight spark !—
Free me these hearts that make my curse !—
Remove each black, unholy sign !
Or rather free me something worse—
The blacker gloom and guilt of *mine* !

THE WAIL OF THE MOTHER.

Our child, in the beautiful robes of the dead,
Lay calm on his last white pillow,
And the grief that he left us broke wild overhead,
As o'er the lost wreck breaks the billow ;
It seemed that our hearts in the desolate grave
Should be laid down to perish beside him ;
We felt that our pleadings no longer could save,
Nor our hands from corruption divide him.

They laid him away in the cheerless hall,
Where the cold of the winter was creeping,
Where the curtains flapped on the bare white wall,—
So unlike the warm couch of his sleeping ;—
And the poor mother spoke, as they hid his dear form—
That one moment most bitter and trying—
“I have kept him so long in my own bosom warm,
And now in the cold he is lying !”

They covered the coffin, and dark fell the cloud
As we stood the dead sleeper surrounding,
And we saw the thick sky with the heavy rain bowed,
And we heard the loud storm-wind sounding.
Then the grief of the mother broke forth with a wail—
The last heavy outburst of sorrow—
“They are taking him from us, all frozen and pale,
It will rain on his grave to-morrow.”

Oh desolate mother ! oh bitterest grief
That troubles the deep heart of woman !—
It is well that God's hand holds the coming relief,
That our pains, like our pleasures, are human.
It is well that we know that the cold beats in vain
On the spirit unchained and immortal,
And that falls the broad sunshine, as well as the rain,
On the grave which is heaven's own portal.

BREAKING DOWN.

THERE'S a mournful burden on the wind,
That the passing autumn leaveth behind,
A saddening thought to every mind—
Breaking down !

The flowers of summer before the fall,
The gray leaves off from the tree tops tall,
The joy and the light of the season—all
Breaking down !

Misfortune's heart, before the sneer
Shed upon it from month to year,
Shrinking away in doubt and fear—
Breaking down !

Good resolves and holy desires,
The truth and the hope that God requires,
Melting away before passion's fires—
Breaking down !

The nerve that has struggled through many a fight,
That has battled for duty, and love, and right,
Weakened now, and powerless quite—

Breaking down !

There's a mournful burden, a sorrowful song,
That all things sing me, but sing not long,—
Of the good, the true, the pure, and the strong—

Breaking down !



THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.

“ WILL the thunder hurt me, mother ?”

Said the bright-eyed little child,
As she looked, in the bursting thunder-storm,
In her mother’s eyes, and smiled ;—
As she laid her hand in the guiding one,
So full of the holiest trust
That is ever given to the children of men
’Tween the cradle and the dust.

“ Will the thunder hurt me, mother ?”

Again the question rung,
Before an answering word came forth
From the doting mother’s tongue :—
“ Oh, no, my child, there is no fear
In the thunder’s muttering roll ;—
’Tis only a sound, and cannot harm
The darling of my soul.”

“What kills in the thunder storm, mother,
If the thunder we need not dread?
What laid the harvest man, last June,
Under the chestnut, dead?”
“The thunder kills not,” the mother said;
“But the lightning flash may slay—
The lightning that cuts through the yielding air
Its silent and fearful way.”

No more said the mother to her child,
But I sat me down and thought
That a lesson of knowledge for human kind
This little incident brought :—
*They are not—the threatening things of earth,
Most potent for good or ill,—
But the subtle, the ready, the quick, the keen,
The rapid, and the still.*



WORDS LEFT UNSAID.

VERY sad are the murmurs we breathe to the dying,
And sadder our plaints o'er the absent and dead ;
But there's something more torturing, bitter and
trying ;—

Oh, saddest of all are the words left unsaid.
What the heart and the lips would one moment have
spoken,
Outgushing and free as the songs of the birds,—
By death or by absence the chances all broken,
And frozen by fate all the fond loving words.

What checked us, when down by the moon-lighted
river

Sweet Maude said farewell ere she hastened away,—
That we let the last moment go by—and forever,
And said not the words might have bidden her stay ?

What held back the tongue, when in sorrowful beauty
Poor Nell, like a wreck, floated on to her doom ;—
When a word—ah, that word had the claim of a
duty !—

Might have spanned the dark waters that gave her
a tomb ?

Oh, why, when lost Willie, all broken and sinking,
Held his mute, pleading hands from the wave of
despair—

When the cup of his sin he was bitterly drinking—

Why dropped we no pearl of heart-tenderness there ?
Scarcely heaviest wrong drives to misery faster ;

Scarce more for our sins have we dying to dread !
For *the good left undone* fell the ban of the Master :
Our hearts ban themselves in the words left unsaid !

When the car's in the dust, or the wave, or the
distance—

When it hears us no more, though we shout or we
wail—

Then comes back the curse of neglected existence,
And we see a new glory in pinion or sail.

Still the further away opportunity's dearer ;

Still our home angels languish in coldness and pain :
Would we slight them, if life should once more bring
them nearer ?

Would our lips be so cold and so speechless again ?

The angel we mourn—shall some gentle wind waft her
Once more to our sight—once again to our reach ?
Shall we meet with the lost, in the soul's long here-
after,

And fill up the voids of our stammering speech ?
Heaven grant us the boon, through the rolling of ages,
The links of their knowledge to perfect and wed ;—
To breathe in dead ears, and to write on lost pages
What to-day we are mourning—the words left
unsaid !



“SADLY CHANGED.”

“You are sadly changed, old friend !”—*REAL LIFE.*

SADLY changed ! oh yes, my hair is thinning
From the curls that waved so long ago,
And the silver threads c'en now beginning
To foretell the coming of the snow.
Yes, my face's lines begin to alter,
And my eyes are dimmer than they were ;
Yes, I know that soon my step will falter,
And my back grow bent with age's care.

Youth no more around my pathway lingers ;
All its blossoms without fruit have died.
Age is coming, with its frosty fingers,
And shall pluck my manhood's scanty pride.
I have struggled on to life's mid summit,
Looking hence to see the fields of hope ;
Yet I see no opening prospect from it,
All is rugged down the western slope.

Sadly changed—oh yes ! we're sadly changing,
You and I, from what we once have been ;—
In the spirit's rust, the heart's estranging,
In the storm of grief, the blast of sin.
And no spring shall ever more restore us
What of youth and hope we once have lost,
Till the last sad change shall hasten o'er us,
Till the valley of the dead is crossed.

Then, perchance, the burdened back may lighten,
And the faded eyes grow clear again ;
Then, perhaps, the darkened face may brighten,
And the straining sight look not in vain.
We shall find our perished youth returning,
And be plucked no more by age's hand,—
In the sunlight of th' Eternal Morning,
In the glory of the Better Land.



THE FALL OF THE MILL.

I HEAR its beat on the oaken floor,
 Sounding all night long ;
And its memory cometh, evermore,
 Like an old, remembered song.

I hear it, as I hear the sea
 Beneath a starry sky ;
And it thrills my heart as mournfully
 As when old anthems die.

Many a year its sob and moan
 My pulses dull have stirred,
Ringing a low, sad undertone
 To the sounds of life I heard.

I heard it, when, a bright-eyed boy,
 I knelt by the alder pond,
And sailed my wooden barks of joy
 To some fairy land beyond.

I heard it when the fever heat
Lay heavy on hand and brain,
And I half believed that I felt its beat
Cooling away my pain.

I heard it on the cool night air,
When from the revel wild
I hurried out, with forehead bare,
A shamed and weary child.

I heard its low, remembered song
Steal in on my bridal rest,
When love and beauty, all night long,
Lay pillowed on my breast.

I heard it through the long, long night,
When my only boy was dead,
And on my sad and sudden blight
Some desolate peace it shed.

Still let it beat on the oaken floor,
A thought in folly's wave,
Till it sounds, in a few short seasons more,
A dirge above my grave.

THE BRIGHT BONNIE BIRD.*

THERE'S a bright bonnie bird sitting on the green tree,
And her plumage is glossy and gay ;
But I know what the fate of the birdie will be—
She will moult all her feathers to-day :
For the hawk soareth high, and the hawk swoopeth low,
And the bright bonnie bird he will slay.

Then bursteth the storm-cloud above the green tree,
And shadows are over the way,
And a wing sweepeth down, like the gust on the sea,
When the mariner turns him to pray.
Ah, the hawk soareth high, and the hawk swoopeth low,
And no one his talons can stay.

There's no bright bonnie bird sitting on the green tree,
There's no bright bonny bird now-a-day ;
For her poor broken spirit forever is free,
And her beauty is down in the clay.
Ah, the hawk soareth high, and the hawk swoopeth low,
And the bright bonnie bird was his prey.

* Hilda's song, in "The Merchant's Honor."

THE CALL OF THE SURF.

I MIND me well of a tale I learned,
And treasured fondly years ago,—
Of a brave old sailor, home returned,
Who had swept the ocean to and fro,
Till his cheek in the tropic sun was burned,
And his hair grown white with the arctic snow.

A cheerful home, that through many hands
Had passed, since a boy he went away,—
The teeming wealth of generous lands
Had beckoned him homeward many a day,
From stormy seas and harsh commands,
And the stripes of a master's tyrant sway.

He would stay at home—he took the plough,
And its furrow was like his vessel's track ;
Waves glanced in the grain on the mountain brow,
With its changing shadows, bright and black ;
But he shut the thought away—and now
He sung—but an old sea-strain came back.

Bright sunny skies brought the western wind,
For many days, and it seemed to be
That a calm content had filled the mind
Of old so restless, and wild, and free ;—
That his world at last was bounded behind
The hills that shut him from the sea.

But there came a change :—to the east, at night,
The freshening wind had veered around,
The driving sea-mist stopped the sight,*
And narrowed the far horizon's bound ;
And through the night, in his slumbers light,
He heard far off a familiar sound.

The waves, as they beat on the sandy beach—
The surf, as it broke on the rocky shore—
With a lightning speed and a giant reach,
Back to their midst his heart they bore.
Oh, never to him spoke mortal speech
So loud as the call of the ocean's roar !

He stood on the hill when the morning broke,
Snuffing the mist, with forehead bare ;
With a tear in his eye the sailor spoke :
“It calls me—it calls me ! I must be there—
No place is the land for the hearts of oak—
I choke for want of the fresh sea air.”

He was off and away—another's hand
Must gather at last his golden grain ;
Come bitter blow, come harsh command,
The wreck's dark day of hunger and pain :—
Once more on his vessel's deck to stand,
And sweep the bounding sea again.

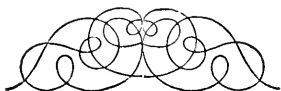


A FRIEND AT THE EVENTIME.

A FRIEND at the eventime,
With a warm and a cheerful seat—
Over a pleasant rhyme
When the soul and spirit meet ;—
No wine upon the board,
And no madness in the brain ;
But a cup with kindness stored—
That 'tis bliss indeed to drain.

A friend at the eventime ;—
To count and to reckon o'er
Old scenes in many a clime,
That we ne'er shall look on more ;—
To talk of the times of old—
Of the forms we have loved and lost,
Of the changing heat and cold,
And the bounding seas we crossed.

A friend at the eventime ;—
To talk of the days to come,
To talk of a summer clime,
And to plan us a sunny home—
With the little things we need,
And the happy things we love ;—
And a home, when old indeed,
With the same true friend, above.



THE SOLDIER OF BUENA VISTA.

'Twas a fearful night when our little band
Camped far away in the Mexican land,
When the first faint light of our watch-fires rose,
In the midst of twenty thousand foes,
In the darkness of Buena Vista.

Oh, twice had risen the morning sun,
Since that fearful, hopeless fight begun,
And twice he had sunk in the blazing west,
And we still fought on, without food or rest,
The fight of Buena Vista.

But the night crept on, and its heavy shade
Brought a pause in the fearful cannonade,
And we watched, oh, a fearful watch we kept,
But we hoped—still hoped—for calmly slept
The soldier of Buena Vista.

We fought and bled till our work was done,
We have worn the meed our valor won ;
But alas, one by one, our comrades fall,
And soon in vain shall our country call
For a soldier of Buena Vista.

IDOL WORSHIP IN THE OCCIDENT.*

MANY thanks to the lawyers—our idols are safe ;
We may worship the foulest, the purest, at will !
No matter how moralists fury and chafe—
Our dear idol-worship is left to us still !

A. may bow on his knees to his darling red gold—
To his bank bills and stocks he may grovel and pray ;
He may dwarf heart and brain—may grow withered
and old,
And there's no law shall flout him—no power say
him nay.

B. may worship himself in his wonderful vest,
In his boots *a la Paris*, and marvelous hair ;
And his wife and his daughters be happy and blest,
Adoring themselves in their opera-chair.

*The Supreme Court of California have decided that "idol-worship" is not forbidden by the Constitution of the United States.

The grim idol Fashion may beggar a realm
To purchase its silks and its jewels of cost ;
Every feeling of good it may smother and overwhelm—
'Tis an idol by law, and it must not be crossed.

C. may follow ambition wherever it leads—
For Congressional honors play ruffian or fool,
Cram the maw of that ghoul that on liberty feeds,
And barter a life for the demagogue's rule.

All the rest of the letters may each take their turn
At worshipping birth, office, influence, name ;—
And the rhymer the lamp of his energy burn,
To that blackest of idols and hollowest—Fame !

And Floy—dearest Floy ! we must each have our
“joss !”

I have weighed all the rest in a balance too true ;
To depart from the rule would be ruin and loss—
So I'll set up my idol by worshipping *you* !

“DEAD AT THE POST OF DUTY.”

“DEAD on the field of honor !”

Was the sad but proud return
In the armies of Napoleon's time,
When they called La Tour d'Auvergne ;
And ever while his eagles
On their flight of triumph swept,
Those gallant words recorded well
How the brave First Soldier slept.

No robes of gold and purple—
No breasts with orders crossed—
Can our eagles give our noble men
So sadly mourned when lost ;
But words of fame and honor
O'er their shrouding wave and sand,
May do a better justice still,
That the world can understand.

“Dead at the post of duty !”

Should their remembrance be
Who on the great ships of our pride
Have met their fate by sea—
Standing on deck and wheelhouse—
All human effort done,
And passing calmly to their fate,
As from a victory won.

No wail above the tempest,
No tremor on their lips,
But life and hope all gathered home
Around their perished ships :
One sigh of hopeless anguish
For those they loved, afar—
And then, a thousand fathoms down,
Where the ocean heroes are !

“Dead at the post of duty !”

Let the world this answer learn,
When coming years shall ask for those
Who never more return.
Be this the proud inscription
On the medal memory gives—
To him who dying fills his place
More nobly than he lives !

“LEAVE ME ALONE.”

LEAVE me alone !

Let me commune in the silence of night
With the dark thoughts of my own bitter soul,
Shut out the wearisome world from my sight,
Over my eyes let the dark shadow roll ;
Still all my senses of pain and delight,
Give to reflection and reason the whole.

Leave me alone !

Let the dead haunt me with glimmering eyes,
Let the past mock me with what I have been ;
Let my lost angels in judgment arise,
Setting their ban on my weakness and sin ;—
Suffering only can make the heart wise,
Let me awhile turn my vision within.

Leave me alone !

So let me feel if I shudder or shrink

At the dark waters that press to my feet ;

So let me taste of the cup that I drink,

Measuring calmly its bitter and sweet ;

So let me stand on eternity's brink,

Counting the pulses of life as they beat.

Leave me alone !

Friends with your counsel and foes with your hate ;

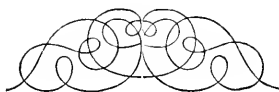
Forms of the beautiful moulded in clay—

Careful reminders of toil's galling weight—

Tempters whose words lead my spirit astray ;

Lonely at last must I grapple my fate,

Lonely the spirit must wrestle and pray.



A HOME TO REST IN.

THE world, dear John, as the old folks told us,
Is a world of trouble and care ;
Many a cloud of grief will enfold us,
And the sunshine of joy is but rare.
But there's something yet to be bright and blest in,
No matter how humble the lot ;
The world still gives us a home to rest in,
Its holiest, happiest spot.

Sweet home ! dear home ! on the northern heather,
On the sunniest southern plain ;
The Lapland hut in its wintry weather,
The tent of the Indian main ;—
Be it gorgeous wealth that our temple is drest in,
Be it poor and of little worth,
Oh, home, our home—a home to rest in—
Is the dearest thing on earth.

But time, dear John, is using us badly,
Our homes crumble day by day,
And we're laying our dear ones, swiftly and sadly,
In the dust of the valley away.
There's a death-robe soon for us both to be drest in,
A place for us under the sod :
Be Heaven at last the home we shall rest in—
The rest of the people of God !



WIND OF THE WEST.

Oh Wind of the West ! so gay, pleasant and free,
Let me sit in this summer retreat,
And feel thee borne in o'er the waves of the sea,
Whose light waters curl at my feet.
Let me feel thy breath play on my feverish cheek,
And nestle amid my thick hair,
And thy tones, joyous wind, to my spirit shall speak
Of nature, and beauty, and prayer.

I will think of thee now as my playmate of old,
That bore my light shallop afar,
When the little boy-sailor was careless and bold,
And steered not by compass or star ;
I will think of thy dash in the bellying sail,
That bore my light vessel along,
While my young heart made music that blent with the
gale,
And my warm lips broke out into song.

I will think of thee now as thou camest at night
To play on my feverish face,
As I sat in the casement and watched the dim light
Of the stars in the heaven of space ;
When my spirit was sick and my pulses were low,
And I lived but in fever and pain,
And I longed for the time when the bright waters' flow
Should cool off the heat from my brain.

I will think of thee now as thou borest me on,
With the foam-crest above the blue wave,
To a love whose lone beauty is darkened and gone,
And a form that is cold in the grave ;
I will think of thee now as thou borest me back,
With the sorrow of years in my soul,
With the laughter of fiends on my hurrying track,
And a speed that had never a goal.

Oh Wind of the West ! I have loved thee of old—
I shall love thee when death has drawn near ;
I would pray thee to come when my temples are cold,
And speak to the dust on my bier.
Oh Wind of the West ! I would drink thy sweet breath,
If it might be, below the green sod,
And think it a memory that struggled with death,
And a kind wish from nature and God.

THE BATTLE OF MONMOUTH.

A Ballad of "After the War."

'Tis good ten years since Mercer fell,
 Borne down at Princeton fight ;
'Tis good ten years since hill and dell
 With battle were alight.
The Hessians have gone back to smoke
 Their long Dutch pipes at home ;
The sword of war is bent and broke,
 And peaceful days have come.

Earl Moira, on his Irish land,
 Forgets how Rawdon fought,
And Clinton dares not take a stand
 To tell the deeds he wrought.
Old seventy-six has glided by,
 And seventy-eight gone on,
And under freedom's happy sky
 We till the fields we won.

The harvest waves on Monmouth ground,
But I have seen the day
A bloodier harvest might be found
Stretched out in grim array ;
When patriot men and hireling men
Lay quiet side by side,
With ghastly wounds by five and ten,
To tell how each had died.

Oh, friends ! it was a bitter day
As e'er in summer came
To drive our cooling breeze away,
And stir our breath to flame.
Beneath our light and scanty dress
We bowed as it were steel—
The very sand like burning brass
Seemed all the day to feel.

The water springs were parched and dry,
And dry the meadow greens ;
The water that we carried by
Grew hot in our canteens.
Yet well we bore the scorching day,
And bore the battle's brunt,
And not a soldier slunk away,
While brave men led our front.

But once we trembled—when we stood
Beneath the cannon's beat,
The foe rolled onward like a flood,
And Lee was in retreat.
But Burr dashed in beneath the shot,
And Washington came on,
And bade our column waver not,
For yet the day was won.

Oh, friends, ye've seen the good old man,
Whose glory was our pride,
Borne proudly onward in the van,
With triumph at his side.
But nobler looked he on that day,
And prouder was his face,
As there he bid us wash away
In victory our disgrace.

Lee lives, a sad and broken man,
Because he dared, that day,
To speak hard words to Washington,
As well, dear friends, he may :
For sad defeat had rested long
Upon old Monmouth's name,
Had Washington not curbed his wrong,
And showed us all our shame.

We pressed them backward, foot by foot,
Still fighting like brave men,
Till long ere sunset we had put
The foe to rout again ;
But warily did Clinton draw
His broken troops away,
And with two armies at nightfall,
Upon the field we lay.

The evening wind came fresh and cool
Over the clover farms,
As all that night, so worn and dull,
We rested on our arms.
The fires were bright in Clinton's camp,
But long ere morning's dawn
His baggage train was on the tramp,
And all his host was gone.

I ween he thinks of Monmouth ground
With less delight than we,
And seldom tells the check he found
To those beyond the sea.
But never may the cannon sweep
Where sweeps the golden grain,
And ne'er again an army sleep
Upon old Monmouth's plain.

THE BIRTH-DAY TRIBUTE.

No CROWN of gaudy gems and gold
Upon thy brow thou wearest ;
But hearts whose tribute ne'er grows old
Shall crown thy birth-day, dearest !
Thou shalt be queen of our desires,
And love shall be thy sceptre,
And sweeter song than this inspires,
For England's Queen, o'er golden wires,
No gray old bard hath swept her.

How would we joy to deck that brow
With gems of regal splendor,
If thou wert not the dearer now
Enthroned in hearts so tender ;
Still be thou proud in woman's pride
Of youth, and hope, and beauty,
And we will ask no claim beside,
To bid our best affections glide
In fond and holy duty

To thee, our bright one. Thou hast seemed
Some spirit throned above us,
That still looked downward as it beamed,
And turned its lips to love us ;
And if we dared to love again,
It was with gentle pleading
That, binding us in one bright chain,
The angel form might still remain,
Love's silent footsteps leading.

To thee, our bright one, on this day
When first the angels gave thee,
And paused upon their upward way
A sweet farewell to wave thee—
We fill the goblet of the heart,
And pray the years returning
To leave thee worthy as thou art
Of love that forms life's better part,
And ceases with its burning.

THE WINDING SHEET.

Why bury the dead in a winding sheet
As spotless and white and cold as snow?
Is it to make their garments meet
For the unknown world to which they go?
Think ye the robes of the spirits fair
Are warped and woven in earthly looms?
Fit ye the body its final wear
When it rises at last from the place of tombs?

Why bury the dead in a winding sheet?
Why give to the dead on their burial morn
A presence the living tremble to meet,
In a robe unlike what the living have worn?
Is it to take from the lifeless clay
The last resemblance to human kind,
And to shut the tears from our eyes away
In the nameless horror that lurks behind?

Why bury the dead in a winding sheet ?

Why make us ever, as years roll on,
Look back for the form we used to meet,
And see that face with its likeness gone ?
Is it for custom old and gray,
That gave to the world its ghosts and seers,
Walking the earth in their white array,
And filling the mind with shadows and fears ?

Why bury the dead in a winding sheet ?

Away with the ghastly custom now ;
Lay the pauper's rags around his feet,
And the monarch's crown upon his brow.
Let the priest's sad robes still wrap his breast,
Let the soldier's helm gleam over his head ;
Let man unchanged lie down to his rest,
And the dress of life be the dress of the dead.

WORDS TO A FRIEND IN BEREAVEMENT.

How shall I speak, oh dearest friend !—
One word to soothe the wringing pain
That like a torture binds the heart,
As if 'twould never loose again ;—
How dull one pang of sorrow's tooth,
Deep buried in your heart and brain !

I cannot bid you cease to grieve—
I cannot bid you cease to weep—
When all that's best beloved of earth
Lies down in death's unbroken sleep ;
For grief will force its way, and wear
Channels like rivers, broad and deep.

The world is lone and empty now
Of what was dearest to your eyes :
One vacant place makes vacant all—
One memory shrouds air, earth and skies—
Till Nature seems one general gloom,
And in her grave all brightness lies.

So will it be—so must it be—
Till Time, the soother, brings relief,
And softens to a twilight dawn
The heavy midnight of your grief;
And Nature, in another spring,
Shall half forget her fallen leaf.

All things must wear one mournful hue,
All sounds must bear one wailing tone;
The winds of all the changing year
Seem o'er one lone grave making moan;—
Sun, moon, or stars alone recall
One sod on which their light is thrown.

God help us! when the tempest comes—
As come it will, some time, to all—
That mingled light amid the gloom
Of his dark Providence may fall,
And that our hearts in human graves
Be buried not beyond recall.

God help us so to give away
To dust, to darkness, and the worm,
The sunniest brow that ever smiled—
The fondest hand, the dearest form—
That something yet of life and hope
May bide the blast and stand the storm.

Oh, if forever this should be—
If life and love had no return—
If the quenched torch in other air
Should never more grow bright and burn—
If words of love unspoken here
The perished ear should never learn—

God help us then, indeed !—for all
But life's poor fragments would be lost ;
A dark wide ocean all in vain
Through strife and toil and struggle crossed,
And all fate's broken threads appear
In wild confusion whelmed and lost.

But, oh ! believe and hope—for sure,
Sure am I, that the clasping hand
May meet, one day, its own again,
And severed forms together stand,
And eyes and lips speak love again
Forever—in a better land.

All that our loved ones were, of good,
They shall be in that happy day ;
All that they had of faults and stains,
By God's own hand be swept away ;
All beauties added by the airs
That o'er the Land of Life shall play.

God bless you ! with the healing balm
Of comfort in your hour of gloom,—
With grace to offer to His throne
A humble spirit's sweet perfume ;
God bless you with her sight again,
Where love shall bear eternal bloom.



A HUSBAND'S BLESSING.

THOU, who in my bosom sleepest,
Through the long and happy night ;
Thou, whom woman's vigil keepest,
In thy new and holy right ;
Thou, who lovest as the spirits,
With a woman's deeper flame,—
May all bliss that life inherits
Ever rest upon thy name !

Thou, who hast been true and trusting
When my spirit bended low,
When my weary heart was rusting,
And my blood forgot to flow ;
Thou, who called me from my slumber
In the valley of the dead—
All sweet things that life can number,
Ever rest upon thy head.

Thou, who hast not changed or faltered,
 When so many hearts grew dark,
But kept on, with soul unaltered,
 To a woman's holiest mark ;
Thou, who gavest up, unshrinking,
 Fortune, hopes and friends for me—
Drink the cups the true are drinking,
 See all things the faithful see !

Thou, who never, never chidest
 That my feet have gone astray ;
Thou, who in affection guidest
 Onward in a better way ;
Thou, who hast all things forgiven,
 Loving and forgiving on—
Meet the same kind fate in heaven,
 When the goal of life is won !

THE WEALTH I'VE GOT.

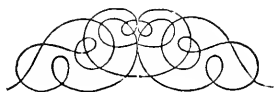
Nor houses or lots in a principal street,
Nor rich fields waving with golden wheat,
Nor darksome mines deep stored with gold,
Nor piles of ingots in coffers old ;—
Not these, though they fill so many a lot—
These form no part of the wealth I've got.

I'm poorer to-day than a year ago—
I was poorer then than I cared to know ;
The future has nothing but struggle and care,
For the bread to eat and the raiment to wear ;
Yet I still look onward and murmur not,
For I'm very rich in the wealth I've got.

I've kind ones to love me, rich or poor—
I've friends whom I hold with a friendship sure ;
I've pleasures and duties, day by day,
And work for each hour that passes away ;
I've a home with its treasures—earth's dearest spot !
Where I hoard like a miser the wealth I've got.

I've a heart, thank God ! that loves mankind ;
I've a spirit, thank God ! that can be resigned ;
I've a hope to finish some trifle of good
Before I lie down for the grave-worm's food ;
I've a hope that neither stain nor blot
Will cling, when I'm gone, to the wealth I've got.

I've a trust in the Master, whose tender care
Giveth bread to eat and raiment to wear ;
I've a firm, stout heart, that He giveth me,
To bear whatever my fortune may be ;—
So earth can be never a sorrowful spot
While kind Heaven leaves me the wealth I've got.



THE LIGHT AND THE TRUST AND THE
STRENGTH OF YOUTH.

STILL gleams the gold from the southern mine,
Still glitter the stars in the midnight sky,
And still the loves of the angels shine
In the glorious light of woman's eye ;
But a ray is gone,
That we looked upon
When life was bright with its early dawn.

Still friendship's voice is clear and calm,
Still love sings over her sunny lays,
And the Truth of Heaven falls like balm
On the bosom torn in life's thorny ways ;
But a feeling kind
Has been left behind,
That in after years we would die to find.

Still bears the arm its burthen strong,
Still struggles the mind with grief and pain,
But the might and the power that was ours so long
Have stolen away from limb and brain ;
And the things, in truth,
Of this sorrowful sooth,
Are the Light, and the Trust, and the Strength of Youth.



THE OLD WOODEN CHURCH ON THE GREEN.

THEY are all laying hands on the things I loved best,
They are all closing over my past ;
They are all heaping sods upon Memory's breast,
Till but little is left me at last.—
But I sometimes look back to the things of old time,
And I think of the things that have been,
And the memory comes, like a nursery rhyme,
Of the Old Wooden Church on the Green.

It is little and old, in this plentiful age,
It has neither a steeple nor bell ;
It is bowing its roof to the pitiless rage
Of the storms it has battled so well :
It is guiltless of glass, and the paint's washed away
In the storm and the sunshine, I ween ;
For no kind hand attends, for this many a day,
To the Old Wooden Church on the Green.

Beneath the mossed roof the small swallow nests hang,
 And the bees hive and swarm in the eaves,
 And the loosed shutters swing with a sorrowful clang
 When the wind through the old churchyard grieves.
 Neglect and decay are around the old walls,
 Dark ruin looks over the scene ;—
 Oh, sad is the sound of the lone foot that falls
 Round the Old Wooden Church on the Green.

Yet I'd rather to-day they should crumble away
 Earth's proudest and loftiest pile—
 Built up as a mock for neglect and decay,
 To stand while the broad heavens smile—
 Than tear off one shred from its worm-eaten roof,
 Or call it the shabby and mean ;
 For we're all, when grown old and neglected enough,
 Like the Old Wooden Church on the Green.

And I hear the sweet voices that chanted within—
 Ah, many a summer ago—
 Still singing the hymn when the eve closes in,
 Though they echo from Heaven, I know.
 I sit in the pew where they sat by my side,
 And as back in the shadows I lean,
 I hear the low prayers that trembled and died
 In the Old Wooden Church on the Green.

I will weep when it falls—I will smile while it stands
As winter on winter goes by,
Protected by nought but invisible hands—
Till I sleep in its shade when I die.
Let them bury me there, in a mound poor and low,
When the blast of the winter is keen ;—
That the winds that wail over me pass, as they go,
The Old Wooden Church on the Green.



ICY COLD !

Icy cold !

The stars in the heavens frostily shiver,
The icicles hang from the burdened eaves,
The white snow gleams on the frozen river,
The winter wind through the tree-top grieves.
Nature is wrapped in desolation ;
All things seem faded, and broken, and old ;
Dead numbness lieth on all creation—
It is icy cold !

a

Icy cold !

Men, shivering, plod through the snow-banked valleys,
Buttoning coats to cheek and chin ;
Poverty shrinks down lonely alleys,
Having no place to enter in.
Naked and starving huddle together—
The feeble and wretched, the base and bold !
God help the poor in this wintry weather !
It is icy cold !

Icy cold !

Before the morn, oh who, my brother,

Of those we have turned from our doors away,
Shall lie on the breast of our common mother,

Stiffened and stark and lifeless clay ?

Help us, oh God ! that no mental blindness

May wrap us in stiffening, freezing fold !

Let not our hearts, made for human kindness,

Grow icy cold !



THE QUEST OF A LOVING WORD.

COIN me some word, oh truest heart !—
From out thy world of loving art,
In which, till life and love are spent,
Thou mayest be shrined and I content.

On altars base—on shrines impure—
On loves that knew but passion's lure—
Have all our dearest words been flung,
Till we have loathed the songs we sung.

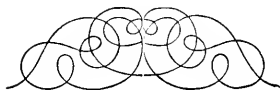
Thou comest, like a thing of peace,
In maddening passion's hot surcease :
Into my heart thou fallest, light
And gentle as the snow-flake white.

Beside the windows of my soul
Thou singest, like the oriole,—
Such lays as, from the robin's breast,
Once soothed the boy to morning rest.

I cannot call thee names that told
So much of shame and wrong, of old
Thy foot shall press no rival's throne,
But one fresh raised, and thine alone.

Coin me some word no human ear
Has heard since love first nestled here :—
That only breathed to Heaven and thee,
No other hears while time shall be.

Yet heed me not ! there is a word
That lips have spoken—ears have heard ;—
And this may all my wish combine :
So let me ever call thee—*mine*



THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIERS.

THEY are coming home ! they are coming home !

Spring out to meet them now !

They have won such a wreath as mighty Rome

Never placed on a conqueror's brow !

We shall hear the beat of their eager feet,

As they marched when they went away,—

And the shouts they meet in the joyful street

And the bugles' merry play.

They are coming home ! they are coming home !

I hear the cannons' peal,

And the thick crowd, cheering to heaven's dome,

Around them surge and reel.

They are here—they are here ! bright sword and spear

In the kindling sunlight burn :

Oh, very dear is a nation's cheer

To the warriors who return.

They are coming home ! they are coming home !

I see the ranks pass on :

The shouting crowd close follow the drum—

Can the last of the train be gone ?

Ah, well I ken that a thousand men

Stepped out to its sound before :

I see them again, and seven in ten

Follow its beat no more.

They are never—never coming home !

They sleep in the burning sand,

Where the black wolf and the jackall roam,

In a far and foreign land ;—

As the bravest will lie, under every sky,

Till war's dark crime shall cease—

Till the summons high sweeps the wide world by,

And the heart of man is peace.

“NO MORE GOLD FOR WAR.”*

THERE rings a voice in Europe’s palace halls,
That stills the nations and arrests the sword :
Joy for creation when no longer falls
The stream of gold on fields of conquest poured—
When “ No more gold for war !” surmounts the purse,
A noble legend, covering years of shame ;
When perishes man’s long and bitter curse,
And the first murderer’s blood forsakes his name.

The gold of nations has been melted down
In the hot blaze that spanned the battle-field :
Millions have died that kings might wear a crown,
Or commons wrest what kings would never yield.
The tree of peace has withered to decay—
The tree of blood its fruit in fullness borne :
When will the barbarous ages pass away,
And earth’s faint watchers look upon the morn ?

* Rothschilds’ answer to Austria, in 1851.

Let the sword perish ! let corroding rust
Eat out the ruddy gems that deck its hilt !
Let merchant princes learn a nobler trust,
And pledge no more their gold for human guilt—
Till “ No more gold for war ! ” becomes the cry
Of herald nations in their march of peace—
Till heaven’s own bow of hope shall span the sky,
And glory’s mockery grow pale and cease.



BROWN EYES AND BLUE.

Two pairs of eyes with their loving light,
To fill our souls of love were born ;
One caught their ray when the noon was bright,
And one in the cool of the early morn.
One charms and wiles with witching art,
Winning a smile and forcing a frown ;
And nestles the other into the heart,
Like a fond love-angel brooding down.

They both have an errand here, we know,
And we try their lesson sweet to learn—
To gain fresh truth when the blue eyes glow,
Fresh warmth and love when the brown eyes burn.
They are idols, both—that the Giver soon
May take away from our kisses fond,—
That our hearts, first losing the glorious boon,
And seeking their light, may look beyond.

But week by week we see the gold
Grow darker over their foreheads fair ;—
And we dream and dream, till we see them old,
With honor's crown upon silvering hair.
And we think of the rays of evil or good
Those eyes may be drinking day by day,—
Of the cold March storm that may blight the bud,
And the worm that may eat the flower away.

Our eyes so dim with the misty tears,
When over our hearts these memories come—
That we see not the hue each vision wears,
As close in our arms we fold them home.
Each dearer than all the world would be,
Did the other not wake some throb anew !—
Those eyes, oh Heaven, from error free,
And seal them with truth—the brown and blue !

TO A DEPARTED ANGEL.

No more, oh child of light !
No more, oh vision fair !
Shall thy sweet eyes beam upon my sight,
Or thy voice ring on the air :
Thou hast gone by unwooed,
I have shunned thee, day by day ;
No more, in crowd or solitude,
Thou lookest on my way.

Thou brightest of all the band !
Thou fairest of all the throng !—
Who taught of old my trembling hand
To sweep the wires of song—
Who sat by my cradle-bed,
And stood by my mother's knee ;—
A light gone out, in the path I tread,
Thou seemest now to me.

I kneel in the still midnight,
When my soul is hushed to prayer,
And looking up to the throne of light,
I see thine image there ;
And I turn away and weep,
That one who watched my birth
Is far away in yon blue deep,
And I yet left on earth.

Thou brightest of all the band
Who wrestle with human sin,
And hold us back with a gentle hand
When we strive to enter in ;—
How shall I miss thy step,
With its light and silver sound,
And the warning finger on thy lip
When the tempter stalks around.

And oh ! to call thee back—
To hear thy voice once more—
To see thy wing, with its starry track,
Waving my slumbers o'er ;—
To bow as a very child
Before thy spirit form—
Would be the voice of a Saviour mild,
Stilling another storm.

No more, oh child of light !

No more, oh vision fair !

Thou watchest in the silent night,

Or thy wing bears up my prayer.

Yet, far away in heaven

Thou wilt plead before the throne

For the spirit that to thee was given,

And the soul that was once thine own.



CHILL DECEMBER.

FALL on field and meadow,
Chill December's rain ;
Beat, oh Eastern storm-wind
On my window pane ;
But in mercy grant us,
Father, God of all !
That no rain of sorrow
On our hearts may fall.

Freeze the strong man's marrow,
Chill December's air ;
Spread o'er sleeping nature
Icy frost and glare ;
But to hearts of kindness
Strike no chilling breath ;
Spread not in our bosoms
Frosts of grief and death.

Fall on field and meadow,
 Chill December's snow ;
Shroud the humble hillocks,
 Where our dead lie low ;
But in mercy grant us,
 Father, God of all !
That no added number
 Lie beneath its fall !



IN THE SHADOW OF THE MOUNTAINS.

IN the shadow of the mountains—
Floating down the dusky tide ;—
While the half-moon low in heaven
Veils its melancholy pride :
Silence in our little shallop,
As if some young hope had died !

Lillian, stretch your white hand hither,
Let it warm and rest in mine ;
Let me see your eyes of blessing
Through the dusk of evening shine.
Do not brush away the tear-drop
Brimming up—love's sacred wine.

Half the river lies in shadow,
Half is touched with silver still :—
Is it some dark brooding omen—
Is it fate, or is it will,—
That we float adown the darkness
Sad and lone and very chill ?

Is some viewless Charon sitting
In the stern, with shadowy oar,
All our voyage so sadly shaping
That we see the light no more ?
Are there rocks of grief and ruin—
Sunken ledges—on before ?

No ! I feel the gentle pressure
Touching heart and thrilling hand.
What is fate, that brain and muscle
Cannot hold it at command ?
But a few good strokes, my oarsman—
Shoot us toward the other land.

See ! on face—on oar—on shallop
Falls the silver light again !
But the stream will all be shadow
Soon : what seer can tell us when ?
Closer clasp, soft hand ! no matter !
We shall leave the boat, ere then !

THE END OF LOVE AND RHYME.

Would you have me sing, as once I sung,
Old lays of love and hope,—
Such as from lips of ruby sprung
When my heart, like my face, was fresh and young
And the sun of life its radiance flung
On existence's morning slope ?

Would you have me, now, when the noon is past
Forget that my hair is gray—
Forget how many hopes I've cast,
Beggared and broken, to sun and blast,
And be again a boy at last,
As I was in a bygone day ?

'Twould be pleasant, I ween, but it cannot be ;
Time's tide has no backward flow ;—
And the years, dear friend, bear you and me
With steady sweep toward the deep, dark sea,
Where the morning lights of memory
Have almost ceased to glow.

I buried young Love in youth's morning time,
 With kisses, and sobs, and tears ;
I sung o'er his green sod many a rhyme,
But I saw life's rugged hill to climb,
With its thickening storms of hate and crime—
 And I whistled him down the years.

And now, when some plaint of sorrow calls,
 Or I think of shame and wrong,
Or the sad moon shines on ruined walls—
Some strain of rhyme unconscious falls
Like an echo through deserted halls—
 And I know no more of song.

'Twould be pleasant, I ween, to gather again
 All that time has stolen away ;
But there's little of pleasure in grasping in vain,
And the chasing of shadows fevers the brain ;
We tire of hugging the brightest chain,
 And I've done with my rhyming day.

THE LAST PARTING.

Ho ! the parting, the last sad parting,
 When the life-blood ebbs away,
When the erring soul goes home to rest,
 And the body goes back to clay ;
When the glazing eye speaks true of death,
 And the restless tongue grows still,
And the chamber fills with a heavy breath,
 Till the very heart is chill !

When the last death groan and struggle
 Tells, with a horror wild,
That the swimmer on the sea of life
 Sinks like a drowning child ;
When the gripping hand its last clutch makes
 At Hope's eternal stay,
And the blue-veined brow already speaks
 Of the coming of decay !

We have seen Death in the sunshine,—
We have marked him in the storm,—
We have seen his goblin head go by
In many a changing form ;
And his path of tears on our eyeballs dim
Has left full many a trace ;—
But we never have learned to look on him
As an old familiar face.

They tell us of parting moments,
And they mourn over broken chains,—
When the golden links of love are reft,
And nought but rust remains.
I have seen men weep for a heart betrayed,
And mourn over perished gold—
But not as they weep when a brother's head
Is laid in the coffin cold !

Ho ! the parting, the last sad parting,
When rumbles the broken clod
Heavily on the coffin lid,
And the sexton places the sod ;
When the old bell tolls so sad and slow,
Mingled with sob and moan,
When the heavy train from the churchyard go,
And the dead are left alone !

Ah ! they tell us of our meeting
In the far and happy land,
Where the shroud and coffin never come,
And we clasp no dying hand :
But bitter is the night of tears,
Though bright be the morning sky,
And little we reckon how heaven appears—
When the loved lie down to die !



THE NIAGARA IN ENGLAND.*

SHIP of the noble name !
Ship of the giant frame !
True model from the great ship-builder's hand,
Whose fall in early prime—
Whose death before his time—
Cast shadow o'er the science of a land !

Thou holdest, o'er the deep,
A trust thou well canst keep—
Of thy great name's, thy country's, and thine own !
What thou wert formed to be,
Proud voices o'er the sea
Have nobly owned thee—peerless and alone !

In fame's low murmuring song,
That breaks thy course along,
We hear an echo from Niagara's roar ;—
Thy mission links amain
That trans-Atlantic chain
Which yet shall bind the nations evermore.

* On her Cable visit, 1858.

Black as the Dragons old
That down the North Sea rolled
When the stout Vikings swept the whole broad sea—
Thou hast their fair white wing,
But in thee lies a spring
Kept from the Vikings for the days to be.

Within thine iron heart,
Smothered and held apart,
There breathes a spirit of red, fiery breath,
That, when the hot war-cry
Once more shall rend the sky,
Shall sweep thee o'er the waves—the Ship of Death !

Upon thy noble deck,
Where scarce one staining speck
Presses the foot of discipline and pride—
Vikings more fierce than they
With ruin's hand shall play,
And the red bolts of death burst far and wide.

The black Scourge of the Sea—
Onward thy course shall be
Till the last triumph of the fight is done ;
Then, scarred and battered come
In saddened triumph home,
To rest in the calm peace thy bolts have won.

Long be it ere that day !
Long point, by sea and bay,
Thy hidden ports—the eagle's double pride :—
The Olive to the Rose,
Barbed arrows to thy foes,
Whenever wrong shall force the vail aside !



“FALL GENTLY ON HER EARLY GRAVE.”

FALL gently on her early grave,
Oh snow of the winter night !
Lie softly over the form we laid
So sadly away from sight.
Beat gently, as beat the gentle heart
That now is so cold and still ;
Oh cover her kindly, as covered she
All human error and ill.

Let the early sun o'er her swelling mound
Trickle down your flakes in tears,
As pure and constant as those we shed
For the loved of our bygone years.
Exhale above her, oh winter snow,
By mortal foot untrod,
As her own bright spirit floated up
To the sunlight smile of God.

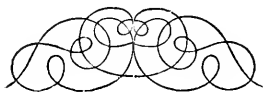
THE PRESIDENT'S DIRGE.*

OH ! nation, shroud your head in gloom,
For your Chief in death low lying,
For your sages passing to the tomb,
For your best and bravest dying ;—
And pause to think how many more
Of the great and gallant-hearted
Shall pass away to the far-off shore,
Ere your noblest have departed.

He lay upon Buena Vista's plain,
A calm and a fearless sleeper,
And he woke in the kindling morn again ;
But his slumber is darker and deeper.
His brave heart dared the foeman's steel
When the battle blast was falling,
But he bows at last to the trumpet peal,
For the Angel of Death is calling.

* Death of President Taylor, 1849.

Oh ! shroud ye the nation's head in gloom,
As on to his rest they bear him,
For few can stand in the hero's room,
And ill can the nation spare him.
But long, in the dark and troubled night,
She shall think of the wreaths he won her—
Who ruled, as he fought, for his country's right,
And died on the post of honor.



CLOSING THE LEDGER, FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE.

Close up the Ledger, Time.
Slowly and sadly, but let it be,
Mournfully passeth by the year ;
What are the records for you and me
Left by the failing fingers here ?
What for passion, and what for love ?
What for avarice and crime ?
What for hope and the Heaven above ?
What of the Ledger, Time ?

Close up the Ledger, Time.
Many a name, for good or ill,
Fills to the margin your blotted scroll,—
Many a high and haughty will,
Many a low but humble soul ;
Yet one page to each is given,
Marking the changing path we climb,
Holding the balance of Hell or Heaven ;—
What of the Ledger, Time ?

Close up the Ledger, Time.
Say, are we creditors for aught ?
Have we a store of noble deeds,
Springing from high and generous thought,
Such as our fallen brother needs ?
Have we laid up for coming years
Words to weave in a funeral rhyme—
Names that will call up grateful tears ?
What of the Ledger, Time ?

Close up the Ledger, Time.
Say what promises hope has drawn—
Say what drafts stern truth has paid ;
Say what bankrupt hopes have gone
In the grave with memory laid.
Say if the heart has kept its own,
Gathering beauty with lure and lime ?
Say what fabrics are overthrown ?
What of the Ledger, Time ?

Close up the Ledger, Time.
Hark ! the knell of the year goes by ;
Have I run out my golden sand ?
Where shall I be when the next shall die ?
Where shall the soul within me stand ?
Naught beyond may the Ledger tell ;
Naught be known but in guilt and crime ;
Listen ! I hear the New Year's bell—
Shut up the Ledger, Time !

THE BITTEREST CURSE OF WAR.

SAD are the burned and blackened roofs,
Where conquering armies on have sped ;
Sad are the robbed and wasted fields
Made bare beneath the spoilers' tread ;
But sadder footprints leaveth war
Than wasted fields and burnings red.

Bitter the crop of flesh and blood
In War's red harvest cut away,
When ghastly faces to the sky
All stark and stiff in death they lay ;
But bitterer crop than even this
Curses War's progress day by day.

The harvest of permitted crimes—
Of passions that unchecked may burst—
The footprints of revenge and hate,
'Neath which all good is crushed and curst—
Oh, these, though sad the others be,
Are War's last evils and its worst.

And these, when pleasant peace again
The ruined walls has quite concealed,
And soothed the sorrow felt for years
Over the slain of many a field—
Within the heart of man shall live,
And still their fruit of ruin yield.



A SONG OF THE WRECK.

THE ocean sands are round her keel,

The ocean surge is rolling past,

The sea-bird's wing is seen to wheel

In circles, round her broken mast.

There is no mortal hand to scare

The white winged sea-gull from her deck ;

No spirit, but the sailor's prayer,

Keeps watch above the noble wreck.

Is she not desolate—old ship,

Left to the surges' wild career,

No more her noble prow to dip

In the wide waters, blue and clear ;—

No more to bear the snowy sail

Home from old Europe's distant shores,

No more to breast the Northern gale

With strong men on her oaken floors ?

Is there no struggle with the storm?—

No struggle that the warrior's steed
Heaves when the throe is on his form,
And he lies down in fight to bleed?

Battles she not with wind and tide,
As in old time, when tempests came,
And the dark wave that swept her side
Shook not the iron of her frame?

Battles she not? Aye, gallantly,

And plank by plank is swept away,
Slowly, as if she could not be
A trophy yielded to decay.

The sea-bird on her broken mast,
The frayed rope swinging from her prow,
She waits the summons of the blast
That sweeps the broad Atlantic now.



SAILING AWAY.

WHEN the years were young that now are old—
When the hair was brown that now is gray—
When the sinews that tremble were brave and bold—
I remember the Captain sailing away.

I saw his wife on the white beach stand,
When he went away on each weary trip ;
I saw the wave of her lily-white hand,
As the boat rowed him off to his waiting ship.

I heard her prayer at the evening hour,
That winds might be fair and storms be few,
And the Master of Galilee's peril and power
Ever watch his track o'er the ocean blue.

When the tempest howled and the thunder roared,
And we shrank in our shelter cosy and warm,
I heard the moans of her agony poured
For her love who battled with darkness and storm.

Away on the sea—the great, wide sea :
She counted his absences, week and day ;
And ever back to her arms came he—
The Captain who went sailing away.

Three decades older are we all,
And life's sad Autumn mourns its May :
But yester-eve there came a call,
And I saw the Captain sailing away.

His wife was there, with her white-clasped hands,
As he took his longer, lonelier track ;
But she stretched no arm o'er the wild sea-sands,
And prayed no prayer for his coming back.

Her sweet breath wished him, well I ween,
Fair breezes to his port of rest ;
But the sea, henceforth to roll between,
Brings back no wanderers over its breast.

He heaved no sigh as he left the shore ;
On his breast his hands calm folded lay ;
The peril—the watch—the storm no more :
O'er the Sea of Death he went sailing away.

SIX SONGS OF HOPE AND DUTY.

I.

“Try It Again.”

Come hear what the bird on the hickory sings,
Whose nest was blown off but a fortnight ago ;
In a new one, as soft, she is folding her wings,
And a new love is perched on the branches below.
Come hear what she sings to the heart of the poor,
Whose temples have fallen in wind and in rain,—
Come hear how she sings a new song that is sure,
To the glorious old carol of—Try it again !

What has been badly done cannot perish too soon—
What has been rightly done will not perish at all ;
One work towers at eve, and one totters at noon,
And we know not their worth till they triumph or fall.
I know it is hard to be toiling so long,
I know it is bitter to struggle in vain,
To be broken by sorrow, and baffled by wrong—
But the duty of life is to—Try it again !

Not a hand on the earth but has labor and task,
Not a heart on the earth but has duty to do ;
Success let us merit, whenever we ask,
And fear not but God will be tender and true.
And still, when we falter and fall in the race,
Or the wreck of our hopes scatters over the plain,—
Remember to look with a pitying face
On the work of our brother, and—Try it again !

II.

“**Let It Go.**”

LET it go, and never mourn it,
Although dear the idol be ;
To the hand that gave, return it,
With a spirit firm and free.
Count the thorn in every pleasure,
Weigh your gold without the dross,
Then, oh grieve not beyond measure,
But be cheerful in your loss.

Let it go—for Time, that wounded,
Will restore all things again,
Save the waste that grief unbounded
Ever leaveth in the brain.
Not a joy that once has blessed us
From the world has passed away,
Not a form that e’er caressed us
Perished in the burial clay.

Let it go—within the bosom
Of the kind and faithful earth,
Still are hidden bud and blossom
That will soon make glad our dearth.
Earth has still her sunny places,
Brighter than the lost have been,
If we look with cheerful faces,
And deserve to enter in.

Let it go, and trust in Heaven,
Although dear the idol be :
Freely are all blessings given,
And recalled with hands as free.
We shall richer be for losing,
If we bear our loss aright,—
And rejoice, when life is closing,
O'er the blossom and the blight.

III.

“Forgive and Forget.”

THERE is many an hour in a lifetime of years,
There is many a moment in every hour,
And an angel's broad wing on his shoulder he wears,
Who never gives passion one moment of power ;—
Who never grows haughty in fortune and pride,
Who never grows bitter in pain and regret,
Who speaks God's own justice, and nothing beside,
And leaves us no word to Forgive or Forget.

We all burn with passion and tremble with wrath,
We all speak harsh words that were better unsaid,
We all take false steps in humanity's path,
And trample on others, sometimes, as we tread :
And shall we refuse to another's demand
The pardon so oft we have needed and met?—
Shall we plead with the lip while we shut up the hand,
And only our own faults Forgive and Forget?

Who wrongs me degrades himself lower than me,
Gives me the world's pity, himself the disgrace ;
But when he repents, and I turn from his plea,
He suffers my wrong, and I stand in his place.
Oh, help us, great Heaven ! to treasure no more
The shadows and wrongs in our memories set ;
Wave the wing of thy peace all our bitterness o'er,
And teach us, God like, to Forgive and Forget.

IV.

"Never Too Late."

'Tis idle to mourn over perishing gold,
Or to weep for a fond hope betrayed ;
For the fair tree of knowledge springs up, as of old,
From the dust where our errors are laid.
'Tis folly to think that the world is our foe,
And to heap bitter words upon fate ;
For one glorious hope lights the world with its glow—
While we live it is Never Too Late.

'Tis weak to grow haughty in fortune and power,
Forgetting the nature we bear,
But 'tis weaker to fail in life's stormiest hour,
And fold up our hands in despair.
What might have been done in the time that is past,
May be yet done to-day--by the great,
For 'tis only to bind opportunity fast,
And think it is Never Too Late.

Crowns have fallen away from the foreheads of kings
Who faltered a moment and feared,—
While the hopeful and bold, from the commonest things
The proudest of monuments reared.
The heroes of life are the men of all time,
Who calmly their trial await,—
Who shrink not to delve, and who fear not to climb,
And know it is Never Too Late.

V.

“It Is Well.”

'Tis not the grip of the iron band
That maketh the prisoner's pain,—
But the struggle long with weary hand
To wrench away the chain.
'Tis not the lack of vital air
For which so many have died,
But the bitter thought that a wall was there,
And the outer world so wide ;—

And Heaven, the merciful, gives us not
The heaviest griefs we tell :
No man bears ever a hopeless lot
Who sayeth "It Is Well."

Oh trusting thought of a steadfast soul,
Be mine when sorrows fall,
And though the darkest waves may roll,
They cannot overwhelm me all.
Be with me when afflictions light
Of my chastening Father speak ;
Be with me when my bloom is blight,
And the death-shade covers my cheek.
Let me ever think against whose law
My spirit would rebel,
And follow the lines his hand may draw,
Still saying "It Is Well."

VI.

"Wait Your Time."

Wait, wait, though the time is long,
Wait, wait, though the day is dark,
Though bitter envy and mighty wrong
Have stamped your name with an evil mark ;
Though Fame's white wings outsoar the reach,
Or Poverty ices the hill you climb,
Still learn what adversity comes to teach,
And calmly, patiently Wait Your Time.

Plant your seed in the teeming ground,
Nurse and nourish the early shoot,
See that no canker is gathering round,
But look not too soon for the golden fruit;—
For only in weakness the mighty tree
Shall spring and grow to its glorious prime ;
Labor and sorrow our weakness must be—
Oh ! murmur no more, but Wait Your Time.

“ I can wait,” said the Grecian sage,
As the scoffing populace passed him by,
And he still worked on at his grand old page,
Lifting to Heaven his cheerful eye.
Every day does the world repay
To the poor and noble her early crime,
But the clouds of sorrow will roll away
From the hearts of all in the Lord’s Good Time.

“OUR DEAD ARE DEAREST !”

Our dead are dearest to us all,
Of those that people earth or heaven !
For them the sweetest names we call,
To them our dearest thoughts are given.

The sisters we have laid in earth
Have never lost their early bloom ;
Our buried children, as at birth,
Look at us from beyond the tomb.

The sweetest rhymes that ever burst
From any mortal pen or tongue,
Have praised some buried love the first,—
In choking tears the sweetest sung.

Sweet “Highland Mary” ne’er had thrilled
The whole world, if she had not died ;
Nor “Lilly Dale” our pulses stilled,
Till buried by some green hill-side.

Our dead are dearest to us all ;
They have no stains to be forgiven ;—
Them saddest, sweetest, we recall,
Of all that people earth or heaven !

THE PEPPERIDGE TREE.

WE all have our favorites, living or dead,
We all have our memories, olden or young;
Some thought of the past is on every head,
Some thrill in the heart and some word on the tongue.
I care not how humble the watchword may sound,
I care not how common the record may be,
There is something of old that our hearts cling around,
And mine is the Pepperidge Tree.

I saw it stand waving against the blue sky
When, a little pet infant, I crawled to the door,
And watched, when I grew, as the sunshine went by,
How its shadow crept eastward, each hour more and
more ;—
I heard the birds sing in its branches at morn
A sweet little song that comes seldom to me ;
Beneath the low roof where it waved I was born,
And I loved the old Pepperidge Tree.

It drooped and grew pale when my mother was dead,
And it drooped when my sister was laid in the clay,
Till the green leaves fell off when the summer-birds
fled,

And never came back when the snow went away.
The summer birds sung in its branches no more,
And I thought how deserted and lone it would be;
But a mercy the storm in its bitterness bore,
And farewell to the Pepperidge Tree.



THE RETURN OF THE LOST.

I AM haunted at midnight by faces and forms
That I've missed from the wide earth for many a day ;
Pliant forms and fair brows that were food for the
worms
Come thronging again from the wave and the clay.
The marble is rolled from the prisoning tomb,
And backward to life the dark waters are crossed ;
The night has a life-time of pleasure and gloom,
For I see in my dreams the return of the lost.

One by one they had left me in grief and in tears,
When death, gentle death, came with beckoning hand,
And I knew that their feet had but followed the years
To a kindlier sky and a sunnier land :
My heart bowed as bend nature's perishing flowers
In autumn's sad day to the storm and the frost,
And calmly I counted the lingering hours
That should bring me in death the return of the lost

They come ere their time to my spirit again,
They brood in the night hours over my rest,
They mock me with shapes that are hollow and vain,
That my fond stretching arms cannot clasp to my
breast ;—
They haunt me—kind Heaven make quiet my sleep,
For in doubt and in dread my worn spirit is toss'd !
Oh, grief may be endless and suffering deep,
But we ask not on earth the return of the lost.



TO ONE ALMOST FORGOTTEN.

ONE by one the thoughts and feelings
That were once for thee alone,
Time has added to his stealings,
As my years have older grown.—
I have laid thy recollections
Where I lay forbidden things ;
I have cooled my warm affections
Pleasantly, at other springs.

Months and years have rolled above me
Since my weakness was confessed ;
Other hearts have learned to love me,
Other lips to mine been pressed.
I am desolate no longer,
Praying in my grief to die,—
For the spirit has been stronger
Than the blast that swept it by.

I have thoughts that round me cluster,
As the flatterers of a king,
And Hope knoweth where to trust her,
Fearing not a broken wing.

I have built a second altar
Where she sits with folded plumes,
Cheering those who faint and falter
With a wreath that ever blooms.

Thou art far away—I never
Shall recall thy face in life ;
Thou, in all life's fitful fever,
Art no sharer in the strife ;—
And thy memory only lingers
With the flowers that sweetly sprung,
And were plucked by other fingers
When the morn of life was young.

THE HAUNTING OF THE DEAD.

I AM haunted in the midnight,
 When my weary head
On the pleasant pillow lies,
And dull sleep has closed my eyes,—
 Haunted by the dead.

From the grave and from the billow,
 Where, for many years,
They have slept their quiet sleep,
Till my eyes have ceased to weep,
 And forgot their tears—

In the forms once lost and buried
 They appear again ;
And they haunt me, till a fear
And a shadow black and drear,
 Fall upon my brain.

Is there truth in olden fables ?
Do the dead arise ?
Is the grave's dark sleep unblest,
While upon the buried breast
Wrong or sorrow lies ?

Have I wronged the dead ? Accuse me,
Spirits of the past !
If a shadow or a stain,
From my erring hand or brain,
On your graves is cast.

In the name of God's great justice,
Ask ye aught from me ?
Is there work for human hand,
That your speechless lips demand,
Ere your rest shall be ?

Never from their pale lips breaking
Comes one answering tone ;
But they sit unmoved and stark,
Through the midnight cold and dark,
In my chamber lone.

THE MOTHER OF SISERA.

MORN, with its golden glory,
Noon, with its burning blaze,
Eve, with its cooling shadows,
And midnight's starry rays—
Days tedious, but uncounted,
Beside the window seat,
The mother lonely watches
For her son's returning feet.

She saw him in his triumph,
When the warrior went away,
She heard his clashing cymbals,
She saw his pennons play ;
She saw his mighty chariot
And the steeds with curbing rein
And the strong man in his armor
As he sought the battle-plain.

'Tis time the Assyrian legions
Came laden home with spoil ;
'Tis time the warrior rested
Victorious from his toil.
The golden vessels brightly
For his returning shine—
Untasted stands the banquet,
Unpoured the dark red wine.

Why comes he not ? Fond mother,
Watch on : the watch is vain ;
For the Lord hath smitten the spoiler,
And cold is the warrior's brain.
Untouched shall lie the banquet,
Unseen the lights shall burn—
How oft, oh ! earth's fond mothers,
Your watch brings no return !



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